

# Road Maps for Professional Development

By Jaclyn G. Pitts, Staff Writer

**W**hether you've been with the Defense Contract Management Agency for years or have just entered the agency, consider DCMA's career guides your road maps for professional development.

The guides, which have been in development since 2004, give employees an idea of the knowledge, skills and abilities they need and are expected to possess



Dan Mielke, workforce development division chief (Photo by Dianne Ryder, DCMA Public Affairs)

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at certain grades, according to Dan Mielke, workforce development division chief. “[The guides] give employees some ownership of the level of professional development that they need to achieve,” Mielke said. “It gives employees the opportunity to look at the competencies they need to be successful.”

As stated in the “Overall Career Guide,” competencies are observable, measurable patterns of skill, knowledge, ability, behavior or any other characteristics that an employee needs to perform a work role successfully. “In general, competencies are the brainpower or the know-how required to accomplish the mission now and into the future,” according to the guide.

Although career guides are not available for every career series, Mielke said, they are available for the major occupational series: 1101, 1102, 1103, 1150, 200, 300 and 500. Guides are not yet available for the 800 and 1900

series. If a guide is not available for your particular series, the “Overall Career Guide” includes a comprehensive overview of the workforce and professional development philosophies and opportunities available at each level. All available Career Guides may be found on DCMA's Web portal at <https://portal.dcma.mil/portal/server.pt?open=512&objID=3956&PageID=0&cached=true&mode=2&userID=6745>.

The broad-reaching goal of the career guides is to communicate DCMA's career development philosophy and provide guidance on career progression, educational choices and developmental opportunities at DCMA. One of DCMA's strategic goals is to enable its employees to excel, and by achieving this goal, DCMA is able to accomplish its mission of delivering strong customer service through efficient business processes.

Each career guide has learning maps that lay out a variety of skills and competencies needed

to advance at different career levels; primary and secondary courses required to gain these competencies; names and duration of courses; method of instruction; and course providers. Additionally, if an upper-level employee wishes to take a course from a lower career level, he/she is free to do so.

Mielke stressed the importance and usefulness of computer-based training courses through SkillPort/SkillSoft, which are available to any employee at any time. Mielke said employees can take these courses on their own time or, with supervisory approval, may be able to coordinate time during duty hours to complete some CBT courses. "Every employee coming

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in and every employee already in should self-evaluate and see what gaps he or she has and use the guide to map out how to fill those gaps," Mielke said. "Even in a tight budget year, you can still use CBTs." Computer-based courses are available for a wide variety of competencies, including human resources certifications, Six Sigma training, Microsoft applications and leadership, to name a few.

Although development of the career guides was a costly venture at approximately \$1.5 million, it was well worth the effort, especially for completing individual development plans, Mielke said. IDPs are formal documents that identify specific competencies and training needed to develop

professionally, including developmental activities or assignments for on-the-job education, costs and projected milestones for completion of activities, according to the "Overall Career Guide." Added Mielke, "Professional development is a commitment by you to excel. The agency will help out, but if you want it, you have to go out there and get it."

When compiling an IDP, Mielke said, the employee should focus on one technical, one leadership and one overall competency he/she needs to improve in order to complete a plan that is practical and executable for the year. "I would never sit down and write an IDP, and as a supervisor I would never review for approval an IDP, without using a career guide," Mielke said. For current employees, IDPs should be reviewed at least semi-annually to evaluate progress.

Mielke stressed that the main reason DCMA developed the career guides is that every employee can take a look and determine what competencies are expected of him or her for his or her particular series and grade. Then, the employee can do a self-evaluation and determine where his or her competency gaps are and use the career guides to map that competency to courses available for professional development. **C**

**Table A. 500 Series Learning Maps**

Competency	Career Level	Learning Map Codes	
		Primary	Secondary
Accountability	Entry	1814	1740, 1625, 371, 347, 344, 343, 39, 28, 19
	Journey	883, 538	1604, 374, 362, 351, 225, 162
	Senior	277, 277, 54, 53	341, 193, 53
	Accomplished		
Accounting	Entry	580, 30, 580, 580, 587, 586, 580, 583, 582, 581, 582, 579, 578, 576, 574, 573, 572, 580, 570, 567, 568, 5647, 1632, 1617, 1615, 1613, 1611, 1609, 1607, 1606, 1741, 1710, 852, 648, 645, 644, 626, 625, 613, 610, 506	194, 477, 1940
	Journey	1678, 1667, 1659, 1657, 1651, 1594, 1171, 847, 577, 575	
	Senior	1656, 1614	
	Accomplished		
Accounting Procedures and Standards	Entry	580, 583, 581, 587, 600, 579, 576, 574, 573, 572, 582, 646, 1647, 1617, 1613, 1611, 589, 1604, 626, 613, 611, 1603	277, 580, 585, 584, 572, 1740, 1750, 645, 636
	Journey	1667, 1663, 1659, 1657, 1594, 653, 577, 575	
	Senior	1614	
	Accomplished		

  

**Career levels referenced in Table A**

Career Level	Corresponding CS level
Entry	GS 5, GS 7, and GS 9
Journey	GS 11 and GS 12
Senior	GS 13
Accomplished	GS 14 and GS 15

  

Learning Map Code	Course Name	Duration	Method of Instruction	Provider
601	Accounting for Corporations	1 hour to 3 hours	Asynchronous E-learning	SkillSoft/SkillPort
602	Overview of Managerial Accounting	4 hours to 8 hours	Asynchronous E-learning	SkillSoft/SkillPort
603	Principles of Accounting II	7 months	Classroom	USDA Graduate School

The "Career Guides" learning maps are useful tools to help you decide what competencies you need to advance to the next career level. First, locate the competency you need to develop. Then identify your career level and locate the learning map code that corresponds to your targeted competency and level. Finally, look up the learning map code in Table B of the "Career Guide" for more information about the course, its duration, instruction method and provider.