COURSE SYLLABUS

Fundamentals of Systems Acquisition Management Course (Self-Paced)

This course provides acquisition professionals and program managers with a foundational understanding of the Defense Acquisition System and the systems acquisition management process, covering the policies, pathways, and key roles involved in planning and executing successful defense acquisition programs. Participants develop the knowledge needed to navigate the Adaptive Acquisition Framework and apply core acquisition management concepts to realistic program scenarios.

Group classes (Live Online) and onsite training are available for this course. For more information, email onsite@graduateschool.edu or visit: https://www.graduateschool.edu/courses/fundamentals-of-systems-acquisition-management-course-self-paced



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Course Outline

Module 1: Overview of the Defense Acquisition System: Policy, Structure, and Governance

- Explain the purpose and statutory foundation of the Defense Acquisition System.
- Identify key governing policies including DoDI 5000.02 and the Defense Acquisition Guidebook.
- Describe the organizational structure and governance bodies that oversee acquisition programs.
- Recognize how the DAS supports the warfighter mission through structured acquisition processes.

Module 2: The Adaptive Acquisition Framework (AAF): Pathways and Application

- Describe the structure and purpose of the Adaptive Acquisition Framework.
- Identify the six AAF acquisition pathways and the program types each supports.
- Explain how program managers select an appropriate pathway based on program characteristics.
- Recognize how the AAF promotes flexibility and responsiveness in program execution.

Module 3: Key Acquisition Stakeholders: Roles, Responsibilities, and Relationships

- Identify the roles and responsibilities of the Program Manager (PM) and Program Management Office (PMO).
- Explain the role and authority of the Milestone Decision Authority (MDA).
- Describe the contributions of functional advisors including contracting, engineering, and logistics.
- Recognize how acquisition stakeholders interact to support program success.

Module 4: The Requirements and Funding Processes: Integration with Acquisition

- Explain the Joint Capabilities Integration and Development System (JCIDS) and its role in requirements generation.
- Describe the Planning, Programming, Budgeting, and Execution (PPBE) process and its connection to acquisition.

- Identify how validated requirements flow into acquisition program planning.
- Recognize the interdependencies among the requirements, acquisition, and funding processes.

Module 5: Major Capability Acquisition (MCA) Pathway: Phases, Milestones, and Decision Points

- Describe the phases and milestones of the Major Capability Acquisition pathway.
- Explain the purpose and criteria associated with Milestone A, Milestone B, and Milestone C decision reviews.
- Identify the key program activities and deliverables associated with each phase.
- Apply MCA pathway concepts to program planning and milestone preparation scenarios.

Module 6: Acquisition Strategy Development and the Acquisition Program Baseline

- Explain the purpose and content of the Acquisition Strategy document.
- Describe the role of the Acquisition Program Baseline (APB) in managing cost, schedule, and performance.
- Identify the key decisions and considerations that shape acquisition strategy development.
- Recognize how program documentation supports milestone reviews and oversight activities.

Module 7: Risk Management in Systems Acquisition

- Identify the principles and terminology of risk management in the acquisition context.
- Describe the risk management process including identification, assessment, mitigation, and monitoring.
- Explain how risk management is integrated into program planning and execution activities.
- Apply basic risk management concepts to program scenario analysis.

Module 8: Test and Evaluation (T&E): Roles and Integration into the Acquisition Lifecycle

- Explain the purpose and types of Test and Evaluation including developmental and operational testing.
- Identify the roles of the Program Manager, Director of Operational Test and Evaluation (DOT&E), and test agencies.
- Describe how T&E activities are integrated into acquisition phases and milestone reviews.
- Recognize the importance of test planning and evaluation criteria in demonstrating system performance.

Module 9: Life-Cycle Cost Analysis, Affordability, and Should-Cost Management

- Explain the importance of life-cycle cost analysis in acquisition program planning and decision-making.
- Describe the concept of affordability and its role in shaping acquisition strategy.
- Identify key elements of should-cost management and its application to cost control.
- Recognize how cost estimation and affordability analysis support milestone decisions.

Module 10: Case Studies, Practical Exercises, and Program Management Application

- Apply foundational acquisition management concepts to realistic program scenarios and case studies.
- Analyze program management decisions using the frameworks, policies, and processes covered in the course.
- Demonstrate understanding of acquisition lifecycle concepts through structured practical exercises.
- Identify lessons learned from program case studies and their application to future acquisition practice.