Federal Acquisition Certification for Contracting Officer Technical Representatives (FAC-COTR) Program Policy Guide

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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PART I - INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose

1. The purpose of the Department of the Interior's (hereafter DOI) Federal Acquisition Certification for Contracting Officer Technical Representatives (FAC-COTR) policy guide is to establish general training requirements for Contracting Officer Technical Representatives in the Department. The FAC-COTR focuses on essential competencies needed for effective management of contracts.

2. This policy does not apply to contractors or Federal employees known as "inspectors" who are used to provide only inspection or testing services to the Government.

B. Authority

1. Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) Policy Letter No. 05-01, *Developing and Managing the Acquisition Workforce*, April 15, 2005

2. OFPP Memorandum *The Federal Acquisition Certification for Contracting Officer Technical Representatives,* November 26, 2007

3. Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Part 1.6, Career Development, Contracting Authority, and Responsibilities; and Part 7.5, Inherently Governmental Functions

4. Department of the Interior Acquisition Regulation (DIAR) Part 1401.670-2, COR Certification Programs

5. Privacy Act of 1974; Employee Training and Career Development Records--Interior, Notice # DOI—76, which provides authority to maintain records related to FAC-COTR including use of the Acquisition Career Management Information System (ACMIS)

C. Definitions

Acquisition Career Manager (ACM): The ACM is appointed by the Chief Acquisition Officer (CAO) or designee and is responsible for ensuring that the DOI acquisition workforce meets the OFPP Policy Letter 05-01 requirements and any subsequent guidance. The ACM shall also serve on the Interagency Acquisition Career Management Council (IACMC) to ensure that workforce development policies and opportunities meet the needs of the Government's and DOI's acquisition workforce.

Acquisition Career Management Information System (ACMIS): ACMIS is a Government-wide information system managed by the Federal Acquisition Institute that contains education, training and experience information for all acquisition workforce members. ACMIS provides detailed reports to assist managers in short and long term workforce planning.

Acquisition Workforce: The acquisition workforce includes employees who perform various acquisition-related functions to support the accomplishment of an agency's mission, as described by OFPP Policy Letter 05-01.

Bureau Acquisition Career Coordinator (BACC): The BACC, appointed by the BPC, is the individual who coordinates with the ACM and facilitates implementation of the certification program at his/her bureau.

Bureau Procurement Chief (BPC): The BPC is defined in DIAR 1402.101 as the senior GS-1102 official in a bureau or office. In exceptional cases, the BPC oversees the contracting function but is not in the GS 1102 series. The Senior Procurement Executive (SPE) has delegated the approval of FAC-COTR applications to the BPC. Waiver requests must be approved by the SPE.

Chief Acquisition Officer (CAO): The CAO is defined in the Services Acquisition Reform Act of 2003. The CAO provides overall strategic acquisition guidance and leadership for the Department. For DOI, the CAO is the Assistant Secretary for Policy Management and Budget. For the purposes of this policy, the CAO duties have been delegated to DOI's Senior Procurement Executive.

Chief of the Contracting Office (CCO): The CCO, unless otherwise specified by bureau/office policy, is the senior GS-1102 within a contracting office.

Continuous Learning Point (CLP): CLPs are points awarded for successful completion of continuous learning activities. One CLP corresponds generally to one classroom hour and varies for other learning activities, as described in OFPP Memorandum, *The Federal Acquisition Certification for Contracting Officer Technical Representatives,* dated November 26, 2007.

Contracting Officer (CO): A Federal employee delegated authority pursuant to FAR 1.6 and the DOI Contracting Officer Certificate of Appointment (COA) Program to award, administer, and terminate contracts, purchase orders, delivery orders, task orders and modifications; obligate Government funds; and make determinations and findings, all subject to the limitations of his/her COA.

Contracting Officer Technical Representative/Contracting Officer Representative (COTR/COR): COTRs and CORs are terms given to Federal employees who are authorized in writing by the Contracting Officer to perform prescribed administrative and/or technical functions. For the purposes of this policy, the term COTR includes CORs (including space leasing CORs) who perform these functions.

Defense Acquisition University (DAU): DAU is the Department of Defense's (DOD) university for the DOD Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics workforce.

Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA): A law signed in 1990 to improve the effectiveness of the personnel who manage and implement defense acquisition programs.

Federal Acquisition Institute (FAI): FAI was established under the Office of Procurement Policy Act and works to foster and promote the development of a professional acquisition workforce into effective business leaders. FAI is the civilian counterpart to DAU.

Office of Acquisition and Property Management (PAM): The office within DOI, Office of the Secretary, that is responsible for providing overall acquisition policy guidance to the Department.

Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP): OFPP is part of the Office of Management and Budget that is responsible for providing overall direction by means of government-wide procurement policies, regulations, and procedures.

Senior Procurement Executive (SPE): The delegated individual responsible for strategic management and direction of the acquisition system of an Executive Branch agency, including the implementation of the unique acquisition policies, regulations, and standards of that agency. The SPE for DOI is the Director, PAM.

D. Applicability

The FAC-COTR program applies to all Executive Branch agencies, except those subject to the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act. The certification must be accepted by, at a minimum, all civilian agencies as evidence that an employee meets core training requirements to perform COTR functions. However, authorization to perform COTR functions under a contract appointment must be in accordance with individual Bureau policy. The certification process in this policy guide supersedes Part II, COR Certification Program of the DOI COR Program manual. The Department of the Interior will issue certifications to qualified DOI employees only--not to employees from other federal agencies who perform interagency contracting on behalf of DOI.

All COTRs appointed to a contract after November 26, 2007, should be certified within six months from their date of appointment or by May 29, 2009, whichever comes later. COTRs, who held delegation letters on active contracts as of November 26, 2007, must be FAC-COTR-certified no later than May 29, 2009.

The SPE may waive, for a period not to exceed 12 months, all or part of the FAC-COTR requirements in writing, on a case-by-case basis, if granting the waiver is in the best interest of the agency. This authority will be used only when necessary. The written justification will include reasons for and conditions of the waiver; and, the ACM must maintain all supporting documentation to confirm information entered into the ACMIS, as well as for the program quality assurance. Waiver of the FAC-COTR requirements is not delegable.

PART II – IMPLEMENTATION

A. General Information on FAC-COTR Requirements

1. **Education:** There is no mandatory education requirement associated with the FAC-COTR Program.

2. **Competency Achievement:** Individuals will gain proficiency in the skills and competences outlined in the table below, which were established and are maintained by the Federal Acquisition Institute. These are the core competencies on which the certification is built.

COTR Key Competencies*	
General Business Competencies	**Technical Competencies**
Attention to Detail	Acquisition Planning
Decision-Making	Market Research (Understanding the Marketplace)
Flexibility	Defining Government Requirements in Commercial/Non-Commercial Terms
Influencing/Negotiating	Effective Pre-Award Communication
Integrity/Honesty	Technical Analysis of Proposals
Interpersonal Skills	Negotiation
Oral Communication	Effective Contract Management
Planning and Evaluating	Performance Management
Problem Solving	
Project Management	
Reasoning	
Self-Management/ Initiative	
Teamwork	
Writing	

*Descriptions of the competencies may be accessed at: http://www.fai.gov/acm/cotrcomp.asp

3. **Training**: COTRs must have a minimum of 40 hours of formal training and must maintain their skill currency through continuous learning. The training can be obtained through FAI, DAU, commercially-available sources, colleges or universities, or agency-specific courses. Twenty-two (22) of the required 40 hours of training must cover the essential COTR competencies listed above.

   The OFPP has recommended the following curriculum which is comprised of 23 CLPs covering essential COTR competencies. If other training is substituted for these courses, the Bureaus/Offices must ensure that the curriculum covers essential competencies.

   CLC106 - COR with a Mission Focus (8 CLPs)
   CLM024 - Contracting Overview (8 CLPs)
   CLC004 - Market Research (3 CLPs)
   CLC007 - Contract Source Selection (2 CLPs)
   CLM003 - Ethics Training for Acquisition Technology and Logistics (2 CLPs) or similar

   The remaining 17 hours of the required 40 hours of training should include agency-specific courses, electives, and/or training identified by the CCO in consultation with the COTR's supervisor, as necessary for managing a particular contract. The Contracting Officer should assess the COTR's previous experience as it relates to the type of contract the COTR will be managing to determine if additional training is needed. Examples could include additional training on services, performance-based acquisition, earned value management, time and materials contracts, green purchasing, socioeconomic issues, etc. Additional classroom and online training is available on the FAI website. Supplemental references and resources to further develop COTR skill sets can be found through the COTR online community of practice on the acquisition community connection (acc.dau.mil/cor) and through www.fai.gov or www.dau.mil.

   Individuals who completed the DAU's "COR Mentor" course or its equivalent after January 1, 2004, are considered to have completed the mandatory 23 hours of required training. Such individuals, however, are required to complete an additional 17 hours of training to fulfill FAC-COTR requirements.

   Other methods of training will be acceptable for initial FAC-COTR qualification. Certificates issued by any of the following vendors (and any other vendors meeting the competencies and approved by the DOI) indicating 40 hours of COTR instruction will be accepted:

- Management Concepts, Inc.
- Business Management Research Associates, Inc.
- Northwest Procurement Institute, Inc.
- ESI International
- USDA Graduate School
- Houseman & Associates
- Atlantic Management Center, Inc.

Individuals certified as Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting (FAC-C) Level I or Federal Acquisition Certification for Program and Project Managers (FAC-P/PM) Mid-Level/Journeyman are considered to have met the FAC-COTR requirements, but they must still submit the necessary documents to the BACC and obtain certification from the BPC. However, an individual with a FAC-COTR does not necessarily meet the requirements for the FAC-C Level I or the FAC-P/PM mid-level/journeyman.

All COTRs must complete formal training in any additional category (e.g., performance-based acquisition, strategic sourcing, information technology, construction, Architecture and Engineering (A&E) services) required by the CO in consultation with the appropriate Project/Program Office. It is strongly recommended that performance-based contracting and project management training be completed to fulfill the maintenance training requirements (e.g., writing performance-based acquisition Statements of Work; maintaining a workable plan and managing resources to accomplish the overall goal of the project). Additional Departmental or Bureau guidance may apply to COTRs in specialized areas (e.g. space leasing, fire, or aviation).

4. **Work Experience:** There is no Federal standard for experience; however, only those individuals with sufficient technical and management experience to adequately assist the COs in managing contracts should be certified.

5. **Continuous Learning:** To maintain a FAC-COTR, individuals are required to earn 40 CLPs of skills currency training every two years. See Appendix 1 of this policy guide for more guidance on meeting the requirements for continuous learning points. Continuous learning activities include, but are not limited to, the following:

a. Training activities, such as teaching, self-directed study, and mentoring;

b. Professional activities, such as attending/speaking/presenting at professional seminars/symposia/conferences, publishing, and attending workshops;

c. Educational activities and formal academic programs; and/or

d. Experience such as developmental or rotational assignments.

6. **Acquisition Career Management Information System (ACMIS):** All FAC-COTR applicants and current COTRs are required to create and maintain an accurate record within ACMIS. This record will be used as the official record when processing certification applications and maintenance renewals. The ACMIS website is https://admin.acmis.gov/. Acquisition workforce employees should initially contact their Bureau ACMIS administrator for assistance prior to contacting FAI.

7. **FAC-COTR Maintenance Requirements**

a. To maintain a FAC-COTR, individuals are required to earn 40 CLPs of acquisition management skills and/or COTR competencies training every two years from the date of his/her certification. For example: If COTR Smith receives a FAC-COTR on April 5, 2009, s/he will need to earn 40 CLPs by April 5, 2011. However, during the transition period from the DOI COR Certification program to the FAC-COTR program, COTRs will be granted CLPs for training completed between November 26, 2007 and May 29, 2009. The process for recording CLPs during the transition period is delineated in Appendix 4, Frequently Asked Questions, of this policy guide. The Department's ACM and the BACCs will monitor the continuous learning requirements for employees holding FAC-COTRs. Additional guidance on meeting the requirements for CLPs is included in Appendix 1. It is the individual's responsibility to ensure compliance with the continuous learning requirements and promptly enter completed learning activities into ACMIS.

b. A FAC-COTR will remain valid as long as the COTR earns 40 CLPs every two years. If the FAC-COTR is not properly maintained, the COTR's delegation letter(s) will be revoked or modified by the CO(s). In a timely manner, the CO(s) must notify the COTR of any changes to the latter's delegation of authority, and as appropriate, should notify the contractor(s).

c. To verify maintenance of a FAC-COTR, individuals must follow procedures under Part II. D., Maintenance Verification Process.

B. Administration

1. The *Applicant* will:

   a. Keep abreast of updates and policies regarding the COTR community through FAI, DAU, DOI and his/her Bureau along with other related sources.

   b. Maintain detailed records of all learning training and continuous learning activities.

   c. Update ACMIS on a routine basis.

   d. Remain proactive in identifying and completing training and continuous learning in acquisition management and/or COTR competencies.

2. *Bureaus and Departmental Offices* will:

   a. Fund and implement training associated with this program.

   b. As required, issue supplemental written guidance detailing internal approvals and selection of any specific training curriculum.

   c. Establish and maintain accurate, current, and complete information relative to the certification, in accordance with approved records management practices.

   d. Grant FAC-COTRs to qualified applicants via approval of the BPC.

3. *PAM* will:

   a. Update DOI policy based on new laws, regulations, and guidance.

   b. Keep the acquisition management community informed of significant policy changes.

   c. Maintain copies of all certification records.

   d. Provide guidance to BACCs.

   e. Assist the SPE in the adjudication of disputes arising from discrepancies and conflicting information, and issue corresponding adjustments to policies.

4. The *ACM* will have responsibility for managing the program, including the quality control of application records.

5. The *SPE* will grant waivers and resolve disputes which may arise under the program.

C. Initial Certification Process

1. The *Applicant* will:

   a. Complete all requirements for certification.

   b. Prepare a certification package which includes:

      1) A completed FAC-COTR application form for the initial certification (Appendix 2) signed by the applicant and the applicant's supervisor,
      2) Documentation showing completion of all applicable training (copies of training certificates and/or college grade reports);
      3) Copy of FAC P/PM (Mid-level Journeyman certificate or higher) or copy of FAC-C (Level 1 or higher) if the applicant has attained certification;
      4) A printed copy of his/her ACMIS record.

   c. Submit the package to his/her supervisor for review and further action.

2. The *Applicant's Supervisor* will:

   a. Conduct initial review in consultation with the CCO to ensure accuracy of information and completion of all requirements by the applicant.

   b. Sign the certification application and forward the package to the BACC.

   c. Ensure the applicant completes additional training and/or gains the necessary work experience to remedy a disapproved certification request.

3. The BACC will:

   a. Review the certification application for Departmental and Bureau compliance and forward the application package to the BPC.

   b. Assign Bureau-specific identifier for the certificate and ensure the correct identifier is placed on the applicant's certificate. The format for the identifier is three or four alphas and 3 numerics (e. g. BIA001 or USGS001)

   c. Forward approval/disapproval letters and certificates to the applicant's supervisor and the original applications, and copies of ACMIS records and approval/disapproval letters to the ACM.

d. Maintain a copy of the application file.

4. *The BPC* will:

a. Review and approve the certification application; or

b. Disapprove the certification and return the application package and disapproval letter to the BACC for further action.

D. Maintenance Verification Process

1. The *Applicant* will:

a. Complete 40 hours of continuous learning activities every two years.

b. Receive approval of CLP points from his/her supervisor and enter all applicable CLPs into ACMIS. Print copy of his/her ACMIS record.

c. Complete Parts A, C, and D of the FAC-COTR Application Form (Appendix 2), and attach copies of applicable training certificates and ACMIS record.

d. Submit application package to his/her supervisor at least three months prior to maintenance cycle expiration date (every two years from date of initial certification) or within a timeframe specified by Bureau policy.

2. The *Applicant's Supervisor* will:

a. Review applicant's ACMIS record and consult with the CCO to ensure accuracy of information and completion of all requirements.

b. Sign the application and forward the package to the BACC.

3. The *BACC will:*

a. Review the maintenance verification application for Departmental and Bureau compliance and forward the application package to the BPC.

b. Forward approval/disapproval letters to the applicant's supervisor and the original applications, and copies of ACMIS records and approval/disapproval letters to the ACM.

c. Maintain a copy of the application file.

4. The *BPC* will:

   a. Review and approve the maintenance verification application; or

   b. Disapprove the application and return the package with disapproval information to the BACC for further action.

E. Waiver Process

1. The *Applicant* will:

   a. Complete the Waiver Request Form (Appendix 3)

   b. Print a copy of his/her ACMIS record.

   c. Submit the Waiver Request Form, copy of ACMIS record, and any additional documentation to support the waiver request to his/her supervisor.

2. The *Applicant's Supervisor* will:

   a. Consult the CCO to review the applicant's waiver request, ACMIS record, and any other pertinent documentation.

   b. Sign the waiver request and forward it to the BPC for signature and submittal to PAM; or

   c. Collaborate with the CCO to provide instructions to the applicant for the completion of the necessary requirement to apply for certification.

3. The *BPC* will:

   a. Review the Waiver Request Form for Departmental and Bureau compliance.

   b. Sign the Waiver Request Form and forward it to the ACM or deny the Waiver Request Form and return it to the applicant's supervisor.

4. The *ACM* will:

   a. Evaluate the waiver request.

   b. Recommend approval/denial of the applicant's waiver request to the SPE.

   c. Maintain an official record.

5. The *SPE* will:

   a. Review and approve the waiver request; or

   b. Deny the waiver request and return it to the BPC for further action.

F. Disputes

In the event that a dispute arises over a recommendation made by the ACM or the BPC, the SPE will review all relevant information and make a final determination regarding the issue.

Appendix 1: Guidance on Meeting the Requirements for Continuous Learning Points (CLPs)

These guidelines reflect best-in-practice recommendations for continuous learning. Bureaus retain flexibility and supervisors remain responsible for working with COTRs to identify those activities and opportunities of greatest benefit to the professional development of an individual. The training, professional activities, education and experiences that are used to meet the CLP requirements must be job related and/or address essential COTR competencies.

A. Training

1. Completing awareness training. Periodically, Bureaus conduct briefing sessions to acquaint the workforce with new or changed policy. Generally, no testing or assessment of knowledge gained is required.

2. Completing learning modules and training courses. These may be formal or informal offerings from a recognized training organization, including in-house training courses/sessions, which include some form of testing/assessment of knowledge gained.

3. Performing Self-Directed Study. An individual can keep current or enhance his or her capabilities through a self-directed study program agreed to by the supervisor.

4. Teaching. Employees are encouraged to share their knowledge and insights with others through teaching of courses or learning modules.

5. Mentoring. Helping others to learn and become more productive workers or managers benefits the agency and the individuals involved.

B. Professional Activities

1. Participating in Organization Management. Membership alone in a professional organization will not be considered as fulfilling continuous learning requirements, but participation in the organization leadership will be considered. This includes holding elected/appointed positions, committee leadership roles, or running an activity for an organization that one is permitted to join under current ethics law and regulation. The employee and supervisor must first ensure that participating in the management of an organization is allowed by the agency.

2. Attending/Speaking/Presenting at Professional Seminars/Symposia/Conferences. Employees can receive points for attending professional seminars or conferences that are job related. However, the COTR's supervisor, in consultation with the CCO, must determine whether the individual is learning

Appendix 1 (continued)

something meaningful from the experience. Because significant effort is involved in preparing and delivering presentations, credit should be given for each hour invested in the preparation and presentation.

3. Publishing. Writing articles related to acquisition for publication generally meets the criteria for continuous learning. Points will be awarded only in the year published. Compliance with agency publication policy is required.

4. Participating in Workshops. Points should be awarded for workshops with planned learning outcomes.

C. Education

1. Formal training. Supervisors should use Continuing Education Units (CEUs) as a guide for assigning points for formal training programs that award CEUs. The CEUs can be converted to points at 10 CLP points per CEU.

2. Formal academic programs. For formal academic programs offered by educational institutions can be converted to one semester hour is equal to one CEU. A three-hour credit course would be worth three CEUs and 30 CLP points, assuming that it is applicable to the acquisition management function.

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES	RECOMMENDED NUMBER OF CLPS*
Active association membership (in relevant subject area such as program/project management, acquisition management, or appropriate technical area)	5 for an active membership year or 1 for each 60 minutes of activity attended during the year
Publication of related management or technical papers, etc.	20 for articles 25 for technical paper
Formal rotational assignments	40 per assignment
Conference presentations, training or seminar delivery	2 for 60 minutes of first-time presentation (1 for presentation, 1 for preparation, .5 for repeat delivery of same material)
Team leadership activities, participation on project teams for new products/activities	1 for every 60 minutes of participation
Formal education	1 for each hour of instruction up to 36 for a 3 credit course or American Council on Education (ACE) recommendation
Professional examination, license, or certification/ re-certification	40 in the year obtained
1 Continuing Education Unit (CEU)	10 per CEU

Appendix 1 (continued)

Educational Activities (continued)

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES	RECOMMENDED NUMBER OF CLPS
1 hour Professional Development Unit (PDU), or Professional Development Hour (PDH)	1
1 credit hour (college course or ACE recommendation)	10
Conference attendance	1 for each 50 minute presentation attended

***Note - Points are earned in the year accomplished, awarded or published**

APPENDIX 2 – FAC-COTR APPLICATION

☐ Initial FAC-COTR
☐ FAC-COTR Maintenance

PART A - EMPLOYEE INFORMATION

Name (Last, First, Middle Initial):

Email Address:

Phone: Bureau:

Office Address:

Position Title: Series: Grade:

PART B – CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

1. **Training requirements**: Attach all certificates for applicable courses below to this application.
2. **Method of Completion:** Check appropriate space and complete applicable information.

OFPP-Recommended Training Curriculum

CLC 106 COR With a Mission Focus (8 CLPs)
Date completed: _____

CLM 024 Contracting Overview (8 CLPs)
Date completed: _____

CLC 004 Market Research (3 CLPs)
Date completed: _____

CLC 007 Contract Source Selection (2 CLPs)
Date completed: _____

CLM 003 Ethics Training for Acquisition Technology and Logistics (2 CLPs)
Date completed: _____

***OR* alternate 40-hour basic COTR training course**
Double-click in vendor box (Default value=checked)

☐ Northwest Procurement Institute, Inc. (NPI)
☐ Houseman & Associates
☐ ESI International

☐ Business Management Research Associates (BMRA)

☐ USDA Graduate School
☐ Atlantic Management Center, Inc.

☐ Management Concepts, Inc. (MCI)

Name of Course:

Date completed:

ELECTIVES

(Course name)	CLPs	(Date completed)
(Course name)	CLPs	(Date completed)
(Course name)	CLPs	(Date completed)
(Course name)	CLPs	(Date completed)

☐ **Previously held FAC-COTR from another Federal Department/Agency** *(Attach a copy of certification.)*

- Name of Agency:_____
- Date Certification issued:_____

PART C – CERTIFICATION MAINTENANCE

Attach all documentation regarding achievement of 40 CLPs of learning activity.

(Activity Name)	(Date completed)	(CLPs)
(Activity Name)	(Date completed)	(CLPs)
(Activity Name)	(Date completed)	(CLPs)
(Activity Name)	(Date completed)	(CLPs)
(Activity Name)	(Date completed)	(CLPs)

PART D – SIGNATURES

Applicant's Signature_____

Date_____

Supervisor's Recommendation

I recommend the above individual for this FAC-COTR request.

Name:_____ Signature_____ Date_____

Bureau Procurement Chief's Approval/Disapproval

☐ I approve the above individual for this FAC-COTR request.

☐ I disapprove the above individual for this FAC-COTR request.

Name: _____ Signature_____ Date_____

APPENDIX 3

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

FAC-COTR Waiver Request

Name of Contracting Officer Technical Representative:

Email Address:

Phone:

Bureau and Address:

Specific training for which a waiver is sought:

Rationale justifying waiver request (Please be specific and attach additional pages if necessary):

Recommendation of Chief Contracting Officer (CCO)

CCO's Signature _____ Date _____

(Typed or Printed Name) _____

Recommendation of Bureau Procurement Chief (BPC):

BPC's Signature: _____ Date _____

(Typed or Printed Name) _____

Determination of the Senior Procurement Executive (SPE)

☐ Waiver Approved ☐ Waiver Denied

SPE's Signature: _____ Date _____

(Typed or Printed Name) _____

Attach copy of ACMIS record and documentation of completed applicable training

APPENDIX 4

FEDERAL ACQUISITION CERTIFICATION for Contracting Officer Technical Representatives (FAC-COTR)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS/FAQs

Policy that established FAC-COTR

1. How was this program established?

The Administrator of the Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) issued a Memorandum on November 26, 2007, which establishes the Federal Acquisition Certification for Contracting Officer Technical Representatives. The memo is posted at: www.fai.gov. The purpose of this certification program is to establish the competencies for Contracting Officer's Technical Representatives in civilian agencies. FAC-COTR focuses on essential competencies needed by those federally employed individuals acting as a Contracting Officer Technical Representative or Contracting Officer's Representative (COR). The certification requirements shall be accepted by, at minimum, all civilian agencies as evidence that an employee meets the core competency requirements.

2. Why did OFPP establish this program?

Well-trained and qualified COTRs are critical to the acquisition process and the successful accomplishment of mission goals. A strong partnership between COTR and the Contracting Officer (CO) requires a common understanding of how to meet the Government's needs through acquisitions that deliver quality goods and services in an effective and efficient manner. The OFPP establishes a structured development program for COTRs that will improve this partnership and our collective stewardship of taxpayer dollars.

3. To whom does the policy apply?

The policy that established FAC-COTR applies to all Executive Branch Departments and independent agencies, except those subject to the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA).

APPENDIX 4 (continued)

FAC-COTR policy as it applies to the individual

1. **How do I know if I'm subject to the new Federal Acquisition Certification for Contracting Officer Technical Representatives (COTR)?**

   If you are, or will be, authorized in writing by the Contracting Officer to manage and measure contract performance, provide technical direction to contractors, and/or perform prescribed administrative and/or technical functions, you are subject to FAC-COTR. Check with your Bureau Acquisition Career Coordinator for further guidance.

2. **What is required for FAC-COTR Certification?**

   You may satisfy the competency requirements through successful completion of recommended training courses or acceptable alternate courses.

3. **How does the FAC-COTR correspond with the existing DOI's Contracting Officer's Representative Program?**

   FAC-COTR replaces Part II, Sections A through D of the COR Program manual. The Department of the Interior Acquisition Regulation will be modified to reflect the change.

4. **I have considerable practical experience as a COTR. Must I still achieve the certification?**

   Yes. All COTRs appointed to a contract after November 26, 2007, should be certified within six months from their date of appointment or by May 29, 2009, whichever comes later.

   COTRs who held delegation letters on active contracts as of November 26, 2007, have generally taken agency-required training. To recognize this earlier training, current COTRs must review their training in accordance with Bureau policy, ensure that all essential competencies articulated in the OFPP memo have been obtained, and be certified no later than May 29, 2009. Any training required to obtain needed competencies can count toward the continuous learning requirements for current COTRs. It is mandatory for COTRs to register and create a record in ACMIS.

APPENDIX 4 (continued)

5. Why must I meet the FAC-COTR continuous learning requirements?

The FAC-COTR Policy Guide describes core, minimum competencies that are considered essential for successful contract management. If you are required by your Bureau Acquisition Career Coordinator to attain a FAC-COTR, you must not only acquire these competencies, you must also earn 40 continuous learning points every two years to maintain the currency of your certification.

6. What are examples of acceptable skills currency training and continuous learning points?

Guidelines can be found in Appendix 1 of the DOI FAC-COTR Policy Guide. These guidelines reflect best-in-practice recommendations for continuous learning. Agencies retain flexibility and COs remain responsible for working with COTRs to identify those activities and opportunities of greatest benefit to the professional development of an individual. The training, professional activities, education and experience that are used to meet the CLP requirements must be job-related as they pertain to acquisition management.

Continuous learning activities related to COTR activities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Training activities, such as teaching, self-directed study, mentoring
- Learning modules and training courses
- Professional activities, such as attending/speaking/presenting at professional seminars/symposia/conferences, publishing and attending workshops
- Educational activities, such as formal training, and formal academic programs
- Experience such as developmental or rotational assignments

FAI will provide additional guidance as needed on its website, www.fai.gov.

7. Who keeps track of my Continuous Learning Points?

Individuals are responsible for maintaining continuous learning records and for entering their activities into ACMIS. BACCs will monitor the continuous learning requirements to ensure maintenance training is completed in a timely manner.

8. Where can I find training?

Private vendors, the Defense Acquisition University, the Federal Acquisition Institute, DOI University, and other government agencies offer a variety of online and classroom courses that address many of the competencies.

APPENDIX 4 (continued)

9. How do you know FAC-COTR is beneficial to the acquisition community?

FAI will conduct periodic reviews to ensure that the FAC-COTR program is being managed consistently. Additionally, FAI is mapping COTR competencies to learning objectives which will be used to assess current training or develop new training to meet these requirements.

10. What period of time is encompassed in the transition between the DOI COR Certification program and FAC-COTR?

From November 26, 2007 through May 29, 2009.

11. My DOI COR certification expires in two months. Am I supposed to complete Section C-Certification Renewal, of the FAC-COTR application?

If you are required to continue functioning as a COTR, you should apply for a FAC-COTR certification—not a DOI COR re-certification. FAC-COTR has replaced the DOI COR certification.

12. I was DOI COR-certified in November 2007. Will I receive CLPs for the maintenance training I completed during the transition period?

Normally, you would only receive CLPs for training completed during the two-year maintenance cycle in which it was earned. However, during the transition period, DOI-certified CORs will be granted CLPs for applicable training completed between November 26, 2007 through May 29, 2009.

13. ACMIS will not allow me to post-date transition maintenance training with completion dates before my FAC-COTR issuance date. How will I be able to enter the training into ACMIS?

You should create a new training entry into ACMIS entitled *Transitional COTR Maintenance Training* and cite DOI as the the vendor/provider. In the Description of Course, list the activities and dates of the CLPs that are being credited to the new cycle. Enter the total value of CLPs in the CLP/Hours field. For date of training, enter a date *after* the date of FAC-COTR issuance. In the Notes section, write a short statement referring to this policy guide as authority to apply the CLPs to the new maintenance cycle.

APPENDIX 4 (continued)

14. As a COR, I completed a maintenance training course in October 2007. May I receive CLPs for this training after I receive a FAC-COTR?

No. You may only be credited CLPs for training completed during the transition period of November 26, 2007 through May 29, 2009.

15. I completed a 40-hour basic COR course 4 years ago from one of the vendors cited in Part II, A. 3 of the FAC-COTR Program Policy Guide. Will this course allow me to obtain a FAC-COTR?

Your 40-hour course along with your continuous learning activities after the completion of the course will be considered by your Bureau management in evaluating your application for FAC-COTR.