

**INVESTING IN THE FUTURE
THROUGH CONTINUOUS LEARNING**

**Department of Navy Chief Information Officer (DON CIO)
Guidance**

on

Continuous Learning for the

Core IM/IT Workforce

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*Department of the Navy Chief Information Officer (DON CIO)
Guidance on Continuous Learning for the Core Information
Management/Information Technology (IM/IT) Workforce*

I. INTRODUCTION

The civilian and military personnel of the Department of Navy (DON) IM/IT workforce are among our most valuable assets. Their efforts contribute to the products and services underpinning the warfighting and peacekeeping capabilities of the military Services. Their role is central to acquiring the best value goods and services for the Department and conducting military operations; hence, it is a wise investment for DON to support education and training programs that not only train for today's jobs, but also for future jobs, and optimize performance and result in improved program execution.

The Department of Navy's IM/IT workforce is challenged today as never before by the rapidly changing environment in which it must function. The pace of efforts to restructure the IM/IT workforce and the shortage of qualified IM/IT professionals to meet increasing demands, have resulted in continuously evolving work environments and associated competency requirements. Competencies are the knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviors necessary for successful performance. IM/IT personnel must be current with changing technologies and systems concepts, as well as adaptable, flexible, innovative, and willing to learn new skills.

The revolutions that are currently changing the workplace are also changing the way people learn, placing increasing expectations on employees to remain current by taking advantage of new ways of learning. Distributed learning (DL) technologies, experiential learning and other non-traditional approaches to education and training are rapidly supplementing the traditional classroom student/instructor approach. With these new approaches, the DON values the ability of learners to take responsibility for and direct their own learning and development in a variety of ways and on a continual basis throughout their careers. Learners value DON's investment in

their potential for excellence in their Federal careers and regard this as a retention incentive.

The basic construct of the career path for civilian IM/IT workforce personnel is spelled out in the DON IM/IT Civilian Career Path Guide (CPG). The CPG describes the competency requirements and educational and experience opportunities for each IM/IT job role. The CPG can be used in developing a Career Progression Plan (CPP) which identifies the career goal, competency requirements and education, training and experience opportunities that are formalized into an execution plan tailored to the individual. It is designed to ensure that IM/IT professionals not only meet the minimum competencies for their career fields, but that they are afforded a full range of appropriate developmental opportunities including education and training, on-the-job learning experiences, and developmental assignments. A detailed explanation of these developmental opportunities is found in Section IV, Continuous Learning (CL) Standards.

Navy and Marine Corps officer and enlisted career paths and competencies that exist today are currently managed under a variety of ongoing initiatives. Should the need arise, supplementary guidance will be developed.

II. GUIDANCE

The DON expects that all civilian and military IM/IT core workforce professionals will participate in 80 hours of CL activities per year that augment the minimum competencies established in their career fields and required for specific IM/IT workforce assignments. The Core IM/IT workforce is defined as those personnel who are focused on military and civilian IM/IT careers. For every job, these individuals will require specialized and concentrated competencies, shored up by foundational and continual training and education. Core IM/IT workforce professionals are expected to:

- Stay current in technical and functional competencies;
- Become familiar with multiple IM/IT workforce career fields;
- Keep abreast of Departmental policies and programs;

- Stay current with the most advanced management and leadership principles and practices in the public and private sectors;
- Pursue advanced technical, business and managerial education and training consistent with 10 U.S.C. 1745, *Additional Education and Training Programs Available to Acquisition Personnel* and 5 U.S.C. 4109, *Paying for Training and Education*; 5 C.F.R. Part 410, *Paying for Training and Education*. The Navy Learning Network and the Navy College Program are resources for this;
- Prepare for assuming critical military and civilian technical, managerial and leadership positions within the DON.

III. APPLICABILITY

This guidance applies to all civilian and military employees in the DON core IM/IT workforce, at all stages of career progression. Refer to the DON IM/IT Workforce Strategic Plan for definition of scope for the core IM/IT workforce.

All IM/IT workforce personnel shall annually assess their needs for training, education and developmental experiences, and jointly with their supervisors prepare an Individual Development Plan (IDP) or comparable document to include, but not be limited to:

- On-the-job training (OJT) projects, assignments and similar activities to integrate learning experiences with work assignments appropriate for their level of career progression;
- Other CL activities described below.

Completion of certification requirements for the position encumbered should take precedence over participation in other CL activities.

IV. CONTINUOUS LEARNING STANDARDS

Core IM/IT workforce personnel are required to fulfill a minimum of 80 hours of CL per year, completed prior to the end date of their performance evaluation. The individual and supervisor will determine the distribution of CL hours among the various learning

opportunities. The CL requirement can be met via OJT and DL tools. Enlisted and officer performance evaluations should address CL requirements that were completed during the evaluation period. While the specific activities will vary depending on the individual civilian or military officer's career path, certification level, and specific needs for continuing development, emphasis should be placed on CL activities that enable workforce members to stay current using functional and technical training that is outlined below.

A. Functional and Technical Training: IM/IT workforce members may participate in functional and technical training courses, conferences, seminars, and comparable activities sponsored by DON, private and other public organizations, institutions of higher education, and professional associations representative of IM/IT career fields for the purpose of:

- Staying current in IM/IT functional areas, IM/IT subjects and other emerging IM/IT policy areas;
- Completing mandatory and assignment-specific training required for higher levels of certification in one's career field;
- Completing *desired* training (*desired* defined as training that is recommended, although not required, for greater proficiency) in one's career field;
- Participating in cross training to become familiar with, or certified in, multiple IM/IT career fields.

B. Leadership Training: The DON supports participation in education, training, and related activities based on the premise that managers and leaders are developed over an entire career. This guidance is aligned with SECNAVINST 12410.24, which establishes the framework for civilian leadership development. Training for civilian members of the workforce should be consistent with 5 U.S.C. 4103(a), which requires agencies to establish and operate training program(s) and plan(s) for civilian employees to improve individual and organizational performance and assist in achieving agency mission and goals.

- Based on extensive research into the quality of highly-performing government and private sector executives, the DON has identified multiple leadership competencies determined to be important for effectiveness in Federal supervisory, managerial and executive positions,

irrespective of specific functional assignment. A variety of sources sponsor training in these competencies: the DON, Department of Defense (DoD), other Federal training institutions and private sector vendors.

- Workforce members expected to perform leadership duties (i.e., team leader, supervisory, managerial, or executive functions) will determine with their respective supervisor the competencies needing special emphasis at a given stage of career development. Members can then seek training programs, with their supervisor's approval, to supplement and enhance needed development of these competencies. The DON Leadership Competencies are described in the DON IM/IT Civilian CPG.

C. Academic Courses at Institutions of Higher Education:

IM/IT workforce members may complete academic courses to satisfy the CL standards. Individuals may enroll in academic courses of study, with command approval, and in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 4109; 5 C.F.R. Part 410, and 10 U.S.C. 1745, *Additional Education and Training Programs Available to Acquisition Personnel*, for the purposes of:

- Staying current in one's basic discipline or technical field;
- Broadening one's disciplinary or functional specialty by pursuing multidisciplinary fields of study;
- Meeting academic standards considered *desired* (as defined above) in one's career field;
- Obtaining an advanced education in a scientific or technical discipline;
- Obtaining an advanced education in a business or management field, e.g., Business Administration, Management of Technology, Public Administration.

The DoD Office of the Chancellor for Civilian Education and Professional Development ensures and enforces academic standards for civilian training.

Workforce members are encouraged to explore DL opportunities in advanced education.

D. Experiential and Developmental Assignments: The ability to learn from experiences and apply this learning to new and increasingly complex situations throughout one's career is a valuable skill that improves with practice. Opportunities to learn from experience may be made available to IM/IT workforce members as a normal part of their work assignments, e.g., vendor visits to learn about new technology, or through rotational or developmental assignments specifically structured to provide broadening experiences. IM/IT personnel may use such assignments toward meeting the CL standards.

▪ *On-the-job Experiential Assignments:* At a minimum, annual planning for development should include some opportunity for all civilian and military IM/IT personnel at all stages of career progression to engage in challenging, on-the-job assignments that enable them to improve their technical skills, be exposed to new functional skills, or gain experience in managerial and leadership competencies, as appropriate.

▪ *Intra and Inter-Organizational, Rotational, Broadening, and Developmental Assignments:* While military career paths provide rotations on a regular basis, civilians have limited opportunity to participate in rotational and developmental assignments. To ensure that all IM/IT personnel have broadening and developmental experiences, workforce members should engage in at least one developmental assignment during the course of their careers. This assignment is designed to provide exposure to a different functional setting or a different branch or division within the same organization during career field progression. Command intern programs provide such developmental assignments at the entry level, while rotation to a different organization for a three to six-month assignment would be the preferred venue for developmental purposes at the senior level.

▪ *Assuring Learning Outcomes:* Certain principles should be followed in structuring the experience when it is to be used to meet CL goals, whether the learning outcome is to be attained through an OJT experience or through a special rotational or developmental assignment. Supervisors and employees should pre-define the tasks to be accomplished and expected outcomes. Individuals are to be mentored during the assignment and should provide evidence of learning attained through some type of product, e.g., a briefing, a report, a service, demonstration of skills, or other work product. The individual and supervisor are expected to discuss the learning outcomes at the conclusion of the experience.

▪ *Professional Activities:* To fulfill CL standards, IM/IT personnel may also participate in a variety of professional organizations, including the activities of associations related to their functional specialty or discipline. Participation in professional societies and associations must be in accordance with the Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch, 5 C.F.R. Part 2635, *Standards of Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch*, issued by the Office of Government Ethics, and with DoD's implementing regulation, the Joint Ethics Regulation. Consistent with 5 U.S.C. 4109(b), *Expenses of Training*, DON may not reimburse personnel for membership dues paid to professional societies and associations. Approved professional activities include:

- Teaching;
- Presenting papers at conferences and symposia;
- Writing and publishing on topics related to one's expertise;
- Consulting with other DoD components, other Federal agencies, or state and local government consistent with the Economy Act, 31 U.S.C. 1535 and other applicable laws, regulations and policies;
- Consulting with non-profit organizations, consistent with 5 C.F.R. Part 2635, and DoD's implementing document, the Joint Ethics Regulation.

IM/IT personnel may undertake consulting assignments at the request of a local, state, or federal agency or non-profit organization for specialized assistance requiring specific expertise. For example, an individual may honor a one-time request to provide episodic, short-term advice to the Federal Emergency Management Agency or the American Red Cross on Y2K issues. Assignments to consult with other organizations that meet the criteria of Rotational, Broadening and Developmental Assignments, as described in Section IV.D of this guidance, must comply with merit system procedures; DoD Directive 1000.17, "Detail of DoD Personnel to Duty Outside the Department of Defense"; the Intergovernmental Personnel Act; 5 C.F.R. Part 334, *Temporary Assignment of Employees Between Federal Agencies and State, Local, and Indian Tribal Government, Institutions of Higher Education*; and related component procedures for such assignments.

In addition, many of the professional associations in which IM/IT personnel participate recognize singular achievements, such as patent awards and other demonstrations of professional accomplishment. Because achievements such as passing a professional exam or being granted a patent, license or professional certification often require intensive effort or preparation and are evidence of the individual's currency in her field, these achievements may also be used toward meeting the CL standard.

Supervisors and employees will need to use their own discretion in assessing the value of a particular activity. In this regard, supervisors and employees may wish to consult the relevant professional association's own guidelines to arrive at an appropriate decision.

V. INCENTIVES

The ability to demonstrate currency in one's technical or functional field is a highly regarded attribute of the most marketable employees, regardless of whether they work in the private or public sector. The DON may reward individuals upon successful achievement of CL activities.

Commands are authorized to use achievement of these requirements as one among many evaluation factors to be considered:

- When selecting civilian IM/IT employees for advanced development programs;
- When selecting civilian IM/IT employees for assignments and promotions;
- As a career development feature for military officers and enlisted members that could enhance duty performance and increase potential for greater responsibilities;
- When appraising those elements of supervisory performance that encompass workforce management and development to ensure that subordinates are given appropriate opportunities to participate in CL activities.

VI. ANNUAL INDIVIDUAL CONTINUOUS LEARNING PLANNING

Individual Development Plans (IDP) or other comparable documents can be used to record the workforce member's plans for specific CL activities. Navy and Marine Corps officer and enlisted personnel currently have internal guidelines for activities to be undertaken to meet particular learning requirements. Civilian workforce members and their supervisors can use the CPP included in the DON Civilian IM/IT CPG to design IDPs that detail specific activities to be undertaken to meet the requirements of current and projected job assignments and the career aspirations of the individual. IDPs, or other comparable documents, should provide continua of education, training, and experiential opportunities that build upon one another. Experiential learning opportunities should be integrated throughout to reinforce the knowledge and skills gained through coursework. This continuous learning guidance is aligned with SECNAVINST 12400.6 and with SECNAVINST 12410.22A, which recommends that, as a minimum, one percent of the annual activity operating budget be allocated to support non-salary training costs. This guidance is also aligned with *Joint Vision 2020* which states, "An effective innovation process requires continuous learning..."

VII. CONTINUOUS LEARNING CERTIFICATION

An individual can show compliance with this CL guidance by self-certification, with agreement of his supervisor that CL standards have been fulfilled.

VIII. RESPONSIBILITIES:

The DON CIO Board of Representatives (BOR) will:

- Lead implementation of CL Guidance.

The DON CIO will:

- Assess continuing technical, functional and leadership education and training programs and opportunities available from private and public sector educational entities and corporate vendors. Recommend those that address workforce needs, paying particular attention to degree and accredited non-degree courses available through DL and related information age technologies;

- Develop DON IM/IT Civilian CPG and keep it current;
- Lead and coordinate IM/IT workforce strategic planning;
- Develop and maintain a DON strategy that will identify training and educational resources, incorporate guidance into Planning, Programming, & Budgeting System (PPBS), and define career paths;
- Support Navy and Marine Corps implementation of this guidance and recommend changes, additions and enhancements.

Organizational Commands will:

- Implement this guidance by providing resources for continuous learning.
- Provide incentives for military and civilian employees to meet the CL standards and recognize attainment. Such incentives should include:
 - Successful completion a factor considered in selecting civilian employees for assignments, promotions, and advanced developmental programs;
 - A career development feature for military officers and enlisted members to enhance performance and potential.
- Provide incentives for supervisors to facilitate employee participation in CL activities by considering completion of the employee requirement a prerequisite for satisfactory performance;
- Establish developmental and career progression opportunities for IM/IT professionals;
- Recommend to the DON CIO changes, additions and enhancements to the DON's CL Guidance and program.

Supervisors will:

- Ensure that the annual IDPs or comparable documents are prepared for their personnel, consistent with this guidance;

- Ensure, to the extent practicable within organizational, workload and funding constraints, that workforce members are enabled to participate in the activities planned;
- Concur with employee self-certification when fulfilling the CL standards. Supervisor can use Attachment (B) to show concurrence.

Core IM/IT personnel will:

- Identify the types of CL activities they wish to pursue, consistent with organizational and funding considerations, during an annual review of the IDP or comparable document, and obtain supervisory approval;
- Self-certify completion of CL requirements to their supervisors. This self-certification can be recorded by using Attachment (B) as an example.

IX. EFFECTIVE DATE:

This guidance is effective immediately, although implementation will proceed in stages.

- Fiscal Year 2000:
 - CL standards take effect;
 - IDPs are developed;
 - DON CIO sponsors development of initial versions of the DON CIO IM/IT Civilian CPG and DON IMIT Workforce Strategic Plan;
 - Commands initiate planning for full implementation in Fiscal Year 2001;
 - DON CIO and other commands disseminate virtual tools (e.g. Systems Thinking and Knowledge Centric Organizational Model).
- Fiscal Year 2001:
 - Commands commence full implementation.

ACRONYMS

CL	-	Continuous Learning
CPG	-	Career Path Guide
CPP	-	Career Progression Plan
DL	-	Distributed Learning
DoD	-	Department of Defense
DON CIO	-	Department of the Navy Chief Information Office
DON	-	Department of the Navy
IDP	-	Individual Development Plan
IM/IT	-	Information Management/Information Technology
OJT	-	On-the-Job Training
PPBS	-	Planning, Programming, & Budgeting System