

Highlights of [GAO-11-460](#), a report to the Chairman of the Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia, Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, U.S. Senate

Why GAO Did This Study

The Department of State's (State) Bureau of Diplomatic Security (Diplomatic Security) protects people, information, and property at over 400 locations worldwide and has experienced a large growth in its budget and personnel over the last decade. Diplomatic Security trains its workforce and others to address a variety of threats, including crime, espionage, visa and passport fraud, technological intrusions, political violence, and terrorism. To meet its training needs, Diplomatic Security relies primarily on its Diplomatic Security Training Center (DSTC).

GAO was asked to examine (1) how Diplomatic Security ensures the quality and appropriateness of its training, (2) the extent to which Diplomatic Security ensures that training requirements are being met, and (3) any challenges that Diplomatic Security faces in carrying out its training mission. GAO examined compliance with accreditation processes; analyzed data and documentation related to the agency's training efforts; and interviewed officials in Washington, D.C., and five overseas posts.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that State enhance DSTC's course evaluation and tracking capabilities. GAO also recommends that State develop an action plan and time frames to address proposed increases in high-threat training. State reviewed a draft of this report and agreed with all of the recommendations.

View [GAO-11-460](#) or key components. For more information, contact Jess Ford at (202) 512-4268 or fordj@gao.gov.

DIPLOMATIC SECURITY

Expanded Missions and Inadequate Facilities Pose Critical Challenges to Training Efforts

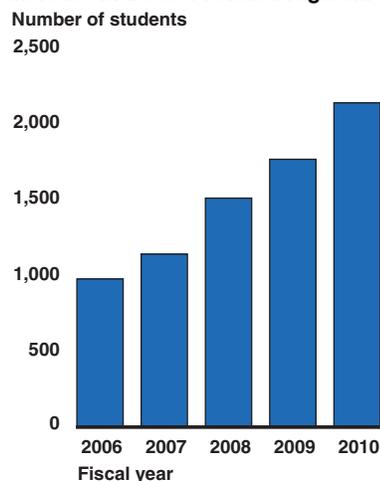
What GAO Found

To ensure the quality and appropriateness of its training, Diplomatic Security primarily adheres to Federal Law Enforcement Training Accreditation (FLETA) standards, along with other standards. Diplomatic Security incorporated FLETA standards into its standard operating procedures, using a course design framework tailored for DSTC. To meet standards, DSTC also integrates both formal and informal feedback from evaluations and other sources to improve its courses. However, GAO found DSTC's systems do not have the capability to obtain feedback for some required training, including distributed learning efforts (interactive online course content). Without feedback, DSTC is less able to ensure the effectiveness of these efforts.

Diplomatic Security developed career training paths for its personnel that identify the training required for selected job positions at different career levels. It uses various systems to track participation in its training, but DSTC's systems do not have the capability to track whether personnel have completed all required training. DSTC systems also are not designed to track training delivered through distributed learning.

Diplomatic Security faces significant challenges to carrying out its training mission. DSTC must train Diplomatic Security personnel to perform new missions in Iraq as they take on many of the protective and security functions previously provided by the U.S. military. DSTC also faces dramatic increases in high-threat training provided to State and non-State personnel (see fig. below), but State does not have an action plan and time frames to manage proposed increases. These expanded training missions constrain DSTC's ability to meet training needs. In addition, many of DSTC's training facilities do not meet its training needs, a situation that hampers efficient and effective operations. To meet some of its needs, in 2007, DSTC developed an Interim Training Facility. In 2009, State allocated funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and other acts to develop a consolidated training facility; State is in the process of identifying a suitable location.

Increase in DSTC-Provided High-Threat Training from 2006 to 2010



Source: GAO analysis of DSTC data.