DEFENSE WORKFORCE

Steps Needed to Identify Acquisition Training Needs for Non-Acquisition Personnel

What GAO Found

The Department of Defense (DOD) has implemented two of three key initiatives to identify non-acquisition personnel supporting acquisitions. DOD has implemented initiatives to identify non-acquisition personnel who (1) develop requirements, and (2) oversee contracts. However, DOD has not implemented a third initiative to identify non-acquisition personnel contributing to services acquisitions more generally. In fiscal year 2018, DOD obligated $175 billion for contracts for services such as management support and information technology. In April 2016, the DOD Acquisition Executive (DAE) directed a team comprised of representatives from the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Air Force, and the Defense Acquisition University (DAU) to develop a schedule for identifying these personnel by October 2016. However, the team did not complete this task by March 2019, when the current DAE directed the team to focus on other issues, and the DAE has not yet determined who will be responsible for completing this task. As a result, DOD has not established how and when it will identify non-acquisition personnel contributing to services acquisitions, or what policy updates and resources may be necessary to identify them.

DOD does not comprehensively identify non-acquisition personnel’s need for acquisition-related training. As a result, the department cannot determine the extent to which it is meeting their needs. All non-acquisition personnel have access to DAU’s online training, but many of DAU’s more advanced courses are only provided in a classroom setting. DAU prioritizes training acquisition personnel—its primary mission—when delivering the resource-constrained classroom training (see figure).

DOD policy requires that DOD components provide DAU information about the training needs of non-acquisition personnel as part of the annual budgeting process. However, GAO found that the components only provide DAU this information for acquisition personnel and requirements developers. Without comprehensive information about non-acquisition personnel’s acquisition-training needs, DOD cannot determine the extent to which it is meeting those needs.

DOD concurred with the recommendations.