

## Training, Education and Professional Development (TE&PD) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

### **What is Training?**

Training is commonly referred to as the process of providing for and making available to an employee, and placing or enrolling the employee in, a planned, prepared and coordinated program, course curriculum, subject, system, or routine of instruction or education, in scientific, professional, technical, mechanical, trade clerical, fiscal, administrative or other fields which will improve individual and organizational performance and assist in achieving the agency's mission and performance goals.

### **What is Professional Development or Career Development?**

Professional or Career development benefits the individual employee as well as the organization by aligning employee training and development efforts with the organization's mission, goals, and objectives. Employees take personal responsibility and accountability for their professional/career development, acquiring or enhancing skills they need to stay current in their roles or to possibly progress to new/future roles.

### **What is an IDP?**

An individual development plan (IDP) is a tool to assist employees in career and personal development. Its primary purpose is to help employees reach short and long-term career goals, as well as improve current job performance. An IDP is not a performance evaluation tool or a one-time activity. It should be looked at like a partnership between the employee and the supervisor. It involves preparation and continuous feedback.

- A career development tool that may be used to help an employee navigate through their developmental activities such as formal training, on-line learning and developmental assignments
- It is reviewed and discussed between the employee and his/her supervisor to ensure that individual needs align with organizational needs
- It can also enable supervisors to have a better understanding of their employees' professional goals, strengths, and development needs
- It is not a contract, but rather a roadmap that may change as individual and/or organizational priorities change

### **Are IDPs required for all employees?**

DoDDI 1400.25 Volume 410 [ <http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/corres/pdf/140025v410.pdf> ]

requires IDPs for all covered employees. While there is currently no regulatory requirement in 5 CFR 410 mandating employees complete IDPs within the Federal Government, DoD considered it a good management practice, adopting it in September 2013.

There are rare circumstances where a IDP for training and development may not be desired or deemed necessary by both the employee and supervisor. In this instance, the completion of an IDP is not mandated. This can sometimes occur when employees are at the top of their profession, planning to leave the organization or Government service, or can't locate meaningful learning and development at the time of planning or similarly situated circumstances. While the completion of the IDP may not be required under these circumstances, supervisors and employees should still discuss training and development needs and document the outcome of the planning discussion.

Some Components have developed their own IDP planning process, forms and systems. Consult your Component HR or Training organization to determine which forms, processes or systems to use to develop your IDP. While there is no one "correct" form for recording an employee's development plan, an effective plan should include at minimum the following key elements:

- **Employee profile** - name, position title, office, grade/pay band
- **Career goals** - short-term and long-term goals with estimated and actual completion dates
- **Development objectives** - linked to work unit mission/goals/objectives and employee's development needs and objectives
- **Training and development opportunities** - activities in which the employee will pursue with estimated and actual completion dates. These activities may include formal classroom training, web-based training, rotational assignments, shadowing assignments, on-the-job training, self-study programs, and professional conferences/seminars
- **Signatures** - supervisor and employee signature and date

SES Employees: Federal agencies are required by law (5 U.S.C. Section 3396) to establish programs for the continuing development of Senior Executives. All Senior Executives are required to have an Executive Development Plan (EDP) in accordance with 5 CFR 412.401. Consult your Component Senior Executive or training organization to determine which forms, processes or systems to use to develop your EDP.

### **How do you go about developing an IDP?**

The IDP process requires communication and interaction between the supervisor and employee. It involves five phases:

1. **Pre-Planning** - supervisor and employee prepare independently for meeting
2. **Employee/Supervisor Meeting** - discuss employee strengths, areas for improvement, interests, goals, and organizational requirements

3. **Prepare IDP** - employee, in consultation with supervisor, completes plan for individual development
4. **Implement Plan** - employee pursues training and development identified in plan
5. **Evaluate Outcomes** - supervisor/employee evaluate usefulness of training and development experiences

Supervisors and employees should work together to complete the employee's development plan, however, employees are ultimately responsible for taking the initiative for their professional development. Below are examples of activities one may utilize for further development and incorporate into their plan:

- **Short-Term Training** - Training that is 120 calendar days or less is considered short-term training. Training instances may include, but are not limited to, professional workshops, seminars, and university courses. Workshops and seminars must have a demonstrated training purpose and must be documented in each Individual Development Plan.
- **Long-Term Training - Long-term training (LTT)** and education is training to which an employee is assigned on a continuous, full-time basis for more than 120 calendar days. The assignment may be at either government or non-government facilities and may include both formal training programs and strategically planned career assignments. Long-term training enables employees to stay abreast of changes and innovations in their occupational fields, learn new skills or develop/improve abilities needed in current or future positions and meet emerging requirements.
- **Career Programs** - Interested in finding out what additional professional development and training opportunities are available within your career field? Take a moment to review the specific offerings within your career program, career field or functional community. Consult your Component HR or Training organization for details.
- **Developmental Assignments** - Developmental assignments provide a way to enhance competencies by giving employees an opportunity to perform duties in other occupational, functional, or organizational elements. This enhances employee understanding of other operations, systems, and relationships. The length of assignments may vary, but must have a well-defined learning objective and be established in conformance with all applicable human resources management regulations. Consult your Component HR or Training organization for specific details.
- **The Defense Skills Connection (DSC) Program** is a voluntary program that provides DOD personnel (civilian employees and Service members) with an opportunity to participate in cross-agency projects, collaborate and share with other Defense agency employees, and expand their breadth of experience by participating in time-limited projects without leaving their place of duty. Additional information on the DSC Program, including how to participate can be found in the How-To Guide at the following link: [Defense Skills Connection Program How-To Guide](#)

To get started: Go to Open Opportunities at <https://openopps.digitalgov.gov/tasks>  
(use latest version of Internet Explorer or Google Chrome)

- **HR University** - Federal Government's "one stop" Human Resources Career Development Center. HR University (HRU) is aimed at professionalizing the Federal HR career field and is designed to address competency and skill gaps within the HR community, achieve Governmentwide savings, identify and offer the best HR training across Government, provide supervisors, managers and executives with critical leadership competencies and HR technical knowledge needed to succeed, and establish a means for sharing resources across all agencies. Find more information at: <https://hru.gov/index.aspx>
- **Formal Training** - OPM offers formal training at its [Management Development Centers and Federal Executive Institute](#). There are also other formal training centers available to employees outside OPM
- **360 Degree Feedback** - 360 degree feedback is a widely used method and tool to assist in identifying strengths and developmental needs. OPM offers [360 degree survey services](#) as do other organizations
- **Mentoring and Coaching** - mentoring and coaching are effective tools for personal and leadership development. For more information, go to our Mentoring Resource Portal at: <https://www.cpms.osd.mil/Subpage/NewBeginnings/MentoringPortal/>
- **Rotational/Detail Assignments** - employees may have the option to participate in details, special/short-term assignments, projects, and other creative ways to expose employees to challenges or otherwise expand their capacity to serve

For more information on DoD Training, Education and Professional Development activities and opportunities, contact your servicing HR or Training organization or go to:

[https://www.cpms.osd.mil/Content/Documents/LearningCoursesPrograms\\_Services.pdf](https://www.cpms.osd.mil/Content/Documents/LearningCoursesPrograms_Services.pdf) or

<https://dodhrinfo.cpms.osd.mil/Directorates/HRSPAS/Leadership-Learning-and-Development/Pages/Home1.aspx>

### **What training expenses can the DoD pay for?**

Components are authorized to pay or reimburse an employee for all or part of necessary expenses incurred for training (5 U.S.C. 4109, 4110, and 5 CFR 410.403). Training expenses may include:

- Course or workshop registration fee
- Purchase or rental of books, magazines, and other materials
- Professional certifications, licenses, and certificates
- Laboratory and library services
- Conference registration fees

For more information on training expenses, consult DoDDI 1400.25 Volume 410 and your servicing HR or Training organization.

**What is the difference between an academic degree program and a tuition assistance program?**

An academic degree program is part of a planned, systemic and coordinated agency employee development program linked to accomplishing the strategic goals of the agency, meeting an identified agency training need or accomplishing goals in the strategic plan. Employees must undergo a competitive process, consistent with 5 CFR 410.308(c), before selection to an academic degree program. Academic degree programs are established under the conditions of 5 U.S.C 4107. Employees may not be selected for academic degrees for the sole purpose of providing the degree or to qualify for appointment to a position where the academic degree is a basic requirement. Tuition assistance programs, including individual courses, are NOT considered part of an agency's academic degree program. Within a tuition assistance program, agencies pay for individual courses/classes. Employees are not required to undergo a competitive process. Supervisors should adhere to the definition of training (5 U.S.C 4101(4)) when choosing which classes/courses to pay for.

For more information on academic degree programs and tuition assistance, consult DoDDI 1400.25 Volume 410 and your servicing HR or Training organization.

**Can agencies pay for employee certifications?**

Yes, 5 U.S.C. 5757 allows agencies to pay for professional credentials including professional certification. For more information on certifications, consult DoDDI 1400.25 Volume 410 and your servicing HR or Training organization.

For more information on academic degree programs and tuition assistance, consult DoDDI 1400.25 Volume 410 and your servicing HR or Training organization.

**I am a GS-11 employee. Can I take a paid or unpaid sabbatical for mission enhancing experience and/or to pursue education?**

Current eligibility for sabbaticals is limited to executives with a minimum of two years in the SES. Outside the SES, organizations within DoD may offer pseudo-sabbaticals via career broadening, developmental opportunities combined with leave and work schedule changes as appropriate for employees. These developmental opportunities allow the organizations to meet critical skill as well as individual development requirements when carefully planned.

For more information about career broadening opportunities contact your servicing Training organization or go to:

[https://www.cpms.osd.mil/Content/Documents/LearningCoursesPrograms\\_Services.pdf](https://www.cpms.osd.mil/Content/Documents/LearningCoursesPrograms_Services.pdf) or  
<https://dodhrinfo.cpms.osd.mil/Directorates/HRSPAS/Leadership-Learning-and-Development/Pages/Home1.aspx>

**Can an employee pay for training and complete the training, if approved by the Supervisor, during normal work hours? Or, since the employee paid for the training does the employee need to use their Annual Leave to complete the training?**

If an employee pays for training that occurs during work hours, the employee may either: (1) Request the supervisor consider the time in training as “hours of work” (5 CFR 551.423). The employee does not use leave if he or she is in a work status. If the training relates to the employee’s job, the supervisor may agree to the employee being in a work status to attend. (2) Request the supervisor approve annual leave to attend the training. If the training does not relate to the employees job, the supervisor may not agree to the employee being in a work status to attend.

For more information on training expenses, consult DoDDI 1400.25 Volume 410 and your servicing HR or Training organization.

**Are managers able to adjust customary employee work hours to take courses not sponsored by the agency?**

Agencies may adjust an employee’s normal work schedule for educational purposes to allow employees to attend a college or university course (5 CFR 610.122).

For more information on adjustment of work schedules, consult DoDDI 1400.25 Volume 410 and your servicing HR or Training organization.

**Is a Federal employee authorized to attend academic courses or other training that is not job related during work hours?**

If the employee’s supervisor does not approve the training, the supervisor can choose not to modify the employee’s work schedule to accommodate the coursework. Supervisors have the right to approve or deny any request for leave or change to work schedule as they are ultimately responsible for the overall planning, coordination, and approving of their employees' leave and work schedule so that the agency's mission and employees' needs are met. Please consult with your servicing HR or Training organization to discuss the specifics of your learning and development situation. You may also visit OPM’s website regarding scheduling and approving Annual Leave: <http://www.opm.gov/OCA/LEAVE/HTML/ANNUAL.asp>

**Must an employee sign a Continued Service Agreement (CSA) before attending training?**

Yes, if a Component requires a CSA, an employee must enter into a CSA *in writing* before the training begins (5 U.S.C. 4108(a) and 5 CFR 410.309(b)). A Continued Service Agreement (5 U.S.C. 4108 and 5 CFR 410.309) is a written agreement between the employee selected for training and the DoD Component. In the agreement, the employee agrees to (1) continue in the service of his/her agency after the end of the training period for at least three times the length of the training, and (2) pay to the Government incurred training expenses if he/she is voluntarily separated before the period of service ends. For more information about CSAs, consult DoDDI 1400.25 Volume 410 and your servicing HR or Training organization regarding CSA requirements specific to your organization.

**What other tools and resources are available for me?**

For more information on Training, Education and Professional Development activities and opportunities, contact your servicing HR or Training organization or go to:

[https://www.cpms.osd.mil/Content/Documents/LearningCoursesPrograms\\_Services.pdf](https://www.cpms.osd.mil/Content/Documents/LearningCoursesPrograms_Services.pdf) or

<https://dodhrinfo.cpms.osd.mil/Directorates/HRSPAS/Leadership-Learning-and-Development/Pages/Home1.aspx>