



DoD INSTRUCTION 5132.15

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SECURITY COOPERATION WORKFORCE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

Originating Component: Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy

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Approved by: Amanda J. Dory, Acting Under Secretary of Defense for Policy

Purpose: In accordance with the authority in DoD Directive (DoDD) 5111.01, DoDD 5105.65, DoDD 5132.03, and Section 384 of Title 10, United States Code (U.S.C.), this issuance establishes policy, assigns responsibilities, and provides general procedures for implementing DoD's Security Cooperation Workforce Certification Program, pursuant to Section 384 of Title 10, U.S.C.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION 1: GENERAL ISSUANCE INFORMATION	3
1.1. Applicability.	3
1.2. Policy.	3
SECTION 2: RESPONSIBILITIES	5
2.1. Director, Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA).	5
2.2. DoD Component Heads and the Commandant, United States Coast Guard.	5
SECTION 3: SCW.....	7
SECTION 4: PROCEDURES	8
4.1. Identifying the SCW.	8
4.2. Certification Program Elements.....	8
a. Mandatory Courses.	8
b. Experience.....	10
c. Continuous Learning (CL).	10
4.3. Establishing and Maintaining Good Standing.	11
4.4. The Certification Process.....	12
a. Eligibility.....	12
b. Certification Authority.....	12
c. Certification Equivalency.....	13
SECTION 5: SCW GOVERNANCE	14
5.1. SCW SSB.....	14
5.2. Other Governance Structures.....	14
GLOSSARY	15
G.1. Acronyms.....	15
G.2. Definitions.....	15
REFERENCES	17

SECTION 1: GENERAL ISSUANCE INFORMATION

1.1. APPLICABILITY.

This issuance:

a. Applies to:

(1) OSD, the Military Departments (including the Coast Guard at all times, including when it is a Service in the Department of Homeland Security by agreement with that Department), the Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Joint Staff, the Combatant Commands, the Office of Inspector General of the Department of Defense, the Defense Agencies, the DoD Field Activities, and all other organizational entities within the DoD (referred to collectively in this issuance as the “DoD Components”).

(2) DoD military and civilian personnel who routinely perform security cooperation (SC) functions, regardless of the funding source for their billet or position, and fall within one of the categories described in Paragraph 3.1. These personnel are referred to collectively in this issuance as the DoD Security Cooperation Workforce (SCW).

b. Does not apply to:

(1) Service members and DoD civilian employees in operational units engaged in intermittent, occasional, or incidental interactions with the security establishment of a foreign country, not substantially accountable or responsible for achieving a purpose defined in Paragraph (7) of Section 301 of Title 10, U.S.C.

(2) DoD attorneys. However, SC training opportunities are available for attorneys when such training is relevant to their duties, and SC-related training may be made mandatory at the discretion of the supervising attorney.

(3) Private sector employees providing services and support under contract with DoD, although there may be SC-related training requirements associated with the functions some contractors perform in support of DoD SC programs and activities. Those requirements should be included in the contract terms.

1.2. POLICY.

It is DoD policy that:

a. DoD Components identify their respective DoD military and civilian personnel with substantive SC responsibilities, as described in Paragraph 3.1., as part of the SCW.

b. The identification of individuals as being part of the SCW does not otherwise change their status or affiliation with their current DoD Component, workforce, career field, career program, or functional area. Such individuals will continue to be supervised by their current organization.

c. SCW members require professional certification. Achieving certification in accordance with Section 4 is a condition of employment for civilians and an order for Service members, but certification is not a precondition for being hired or assigned to an SCW position.

d. DoD maintains the SCW Certification Program (referred to in this issuance as the “Certification Program”) to support the professional development of the SCW.

SECTION 2: RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1. DIRECTOR, DEFENSE SECURITY COOPERATION AGENCY (DSCA).

Under the authority, direction, and control of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, and in addition to the responsibilities in Paragraph 2.2., the Director, DSCA:

- a. Establishes and manages the Certification Program, including the development of program elements and standards; policy issuances; planning; assessment, monitoring, and evaluation; and oversight.
- b. Prescribes the academic areas of concentration (AoCs) and certification levels for the Certification Program.
- c. Delegates certification authority to the Military Departments and other DoD Components with 1,000 or more SCW positions, if necessary.
- d. Coordinates with the DoD Component heads to document Certification Program requirements for each SCW billet or position in DoD manpower and personnel systems, and SCW members' certification status in the Security Cooperation Workforce Development Database (SCWD-D).
- e. Oversees the Defense Security Cooperation University (DSCU).
- f. May waive any requirement prescribed in the Certification Program to the extent permissible by statute.
- g. Reviews DoD Component nominations for potential designation of key SC positions.

2.2. DOD COMPONENT HEADS AND THE COMMANDANT, UNITED STATES COAST GUARD.

The DoD Component heads and the Commandant, United States Coast Guard:

- a. Oversee the following within their respective organizations:
 - (1) Administration of the Certification Program in accordance with this issuance. DoD Component heads and the Commandant, United States Coast Guard, may supplement the requirements of the program to meet their specific missions. They may not delete or modify any of the requirements outlined in this issuance.
 - (2) Active participation in the SCW Development Senior Steering Board (SSB) by a Component or Coast Guard representative at the senior executive service, general or flag officer level.
 - (3) Nomination of positions to DSCA for designation as key SC positions.

(4) Integration of the Certification Program with the Component's career roadmaps, individual development plans, and personnel policies and procedures.

(5) Designation of AoC and certification levels for SCW positions.

(6) Identification of SCW positions and key SC positions in DoD manpower systems of record.

(7) Updates to position descriptions and similar documents to reflect Certification Program requirements.

(8) Maintain updated entries in the SCWD-D for all SCW positions and personnel in those positions.

(9) Compliance with collective bargaining obligations, as applicable.

b. May delegate these responsibilities to a component certification authority (CCA) to manage Component-level implementation of the Certification Program as described in Paragraph 4.4.b.

SECTION 3: SCW

3.1. The designation of SCW applies to DoD military and civilian personnel who routinely perform SC functions, regardless of the funding source for their billet or position, and fall within one of the following categories:

a. Service members and DoD civilian employees working in the SC organizations of U.S. missions overseas;

b. Service members and DoD civilian employees in the geographic and functional Combatant Commands responsible for planning, monitoring, or conducting SC activities;

c. Service members and DoD civilian employees in the Military Departments and Services performing SC activities, including activities in connection with acquisition, the development and implementation of technology-release and foreign-disclosure policies, and planning, monitoring, evaluating, and conducting SC activities;

d. Other military and civilian DoD personnel of DoD Agencies and Field Activities who perform SC activities;

e. Service members and DoD civilian employees who assess, monitor, or evaluate SC programs and activities; or

f. Service members or DoD civilian employees who contribute significantly to SC programs and activities. This includes military and civilian personnel in the OSD and the Joint Staff who perform SC planning, policy oversight, or program management functions.

3.2. DoD Components are responsible for nominating positions to DSCA for designation as key SC positions using the process described on the DSCU website.

3.3. In regard to the readiness of U.S. forces to perform an SC mission:

a. A Military Service or the United States Special Operations Command may authorize an individual to perform an SC mission despite that individual's lack of a certification. A Military Service or the United States Special Operations Command must prepare personnel to perform successfully at or above established standards. This validation of personnel and unit readiness will be accomplished through existing training practices, existing force generation practices, and joint force management systems. Personnel and unit readiness remains a unit commander's responsibility.

b. Personnel who are assigned to forces and have been identified by the Service or unit commander as requiring proficiency in a designated security cooperation AoC should attend the appropriate Certification Program course or courses.

SECTION 4: PROCEDURES

4.1. IDENTIFYING THE SCW.

The DoD Component head or CCA, if one is designated:

a. Identifies SCW positions and key SC positions, and tracks them in the SCWD-D and DoD manpower systems of record.

b. Designates an AoC and a certification level in the SCWD-D for each SCW position identified.

c. Notifies individuals filling an SCW position that they are part of the SCW and must meet the requirements for certification relative to their respective position as described in this issuance.

(1) The most up-to-date list of AoCs is available in the SCWD-D and the DSCU website: <https://www.dscu.mil/>.

(2) There are standard levels of certification for GS-15/O-6 and below, and executive-level certification for SC executives, including members of the senior executive service; general and flag officers; and GS-15, O-6, and E-9 personnel in key SC positions.

(a) Standard Levels.

1. Basic. General knowledge and understanding of SC.

2. Intermediate. Builds on the basic-level. Focus is on developing technical knowledge and understanding of one AoC in the context of broader SC.

3. Advanced. Builds on the intermediate-level. Focus is on increased technical mastery of one AoC in the context of broader SC.

(b) Executive Level.

Focus is on a broad understanding of SC and its strategic application to achieve defense and national security objectives.

d. Updates position descriptions and similar documents for SCW positions to indicate that personnel assigned to those positions are part of the SCW and that obtaining and maintaining certification at their designated AoC and certification level is mandatory for SCW members.

4.2. CERTIFICATION PROGRAM ELEMENTS.

The Certification Program consists of the following elements:

a. Mandatory Courses.

(1) Each position in the SCW has an AoC and a certification level associated with it to tailor the required training to the SC requirements of the position. The AoC and certification level are designated by the DoD Component head or CCA.

(2) SCW members must complete required courses for certification. Those courses are based on the designated AoC and certification level.

(3) SCW members register for their required courses via the DSCU website, or via the Defense Acquisition University website (<https://www.dau.edu>) for certain acquisition courses.

(4) SCW members must complete mandatory courses by the following deadlines based on this issuance's publication date for existing SCW members or the date a new member is assigned to a SCW position:

(a) *Basic-level Certification.*

One year to complete all required basic-level courses. Note that all SCW members require at least basic-level certification.

(b) *Intermediate-level Certification.*

One year to complete basic-level courses and 2 years to complete all required intermediate-level courses (3 years total).

(c) *Advanced-level Certification.*

One year to complete basic-level courses, 2 years to complete intermediate-level courses, and 2 years to complete all required advanced-level courses (5 years total).

(d) *Executive-level Certification.*

Three years to complete all required executive-level courses.

(5) If an SCW member transitions from an SCW position directly to another SCW position in the same DoD Component with the same AoC and certification level requirement as the original position, the DoD Component will determine if the mandatory course completion deadline for the original position should be maintained or reset for the new position. The DoD Component will update the SCWD-D accordingly.

(6) A limited number of courses that were previously offered by the Defense Institute for Security Cooperation Studies (DISCS) are considered equivalent to the new Certification Program courses. Personnel who completed one or more of those legacy DISCS courses within a specified timeframe as indicated on the DSCU website will receive credit for the equivalent Certification Program course. The certification course completion credit will be indicated in the SCWD-D. This process is automatic and does not need to be requested. More information about DISCS legacy course credit is available on the DSCU Website.

(7) Some Certification Program courses have a “test-out” option. This option allows experienced SCW members registered for those courses to take a pre-test. A member who scores high enough on the pre-test will automatically receive credit for having completed that course without needing to take the course. If a test-out option is available for a course, it will be indicated on the DSCU website. DoD Components should encourage experienced SCW members to take advantage of the “test-out” option.

(8) DSCU may determine that a course offered by an academic partner is equivalent to a course offered by DSCU. Those determinations will be found on the DSCU website along with the process for requesting credit for the equivalent DSCU course.

(9) The DSCU Registrar prioritizes course registration for Certification Program courses to ensure SCW members most in need of certain courses for certification are able to take them as quickly as possible. SCW members in key SC positions generally have the highest priority for a required course in their AoC, followed by members in non-key positions for a required course in their AoC, and then all other personnel.

(10) Although they are not eligible for certification, civilian employees of the United States Coast Guard, foreign service nationals, and locally employed staff in positions with substantive SC responsibilities will be treated as if they are part of the SCW for the purpose of course registration, as will private sector employees providing services and support under contract with DoD if Certification Program courses are required by the contract. The Commandant, United States Coast Guard, or the respective DoD Component head must designate an AoC and certification level in the SCWD-D for those personnel before they may register for Certification Program courses.

b. Experience.

(1) SCW members must obtain 1 year of experience in the appropriate AoC at the appropriate level to be eligible for certification. The experience “clock” starts for current SCW members on the effective date of this issuance, and for new SCW members when they are assigned to an SCW position by the DoD Component. The DoD Component is responsible for updating the SCWD-D so that it accurately reflects the date the assignment begins.

(2) As long as the member remains in a position or transfers to a new position with the same AoC and the same or higher certification level requirement for 1 year, the member will receive the experience credit. This process is automated to make program management as easy for the DoD Components and DSCA as possible.

(3) Members who were entered into the SCWD-D before December 31, 2020, have their experience requirement waived and may be certified as soon as they complete their required certification courses.

c. Continuous Learning (CL).

(1) CL is not required for achieving certification, but meeting CL requirements is necessary for a member to remain in good standing under the Certification Program. In

accordance with Paragraph 4.3., members must be in good standing under the Certification Program to be certified and to maintain their certification.

(2) Current SCW members and new SCW members must complete CL on the schedule outlined in Paragraphs 4.2.c.(2)(a) through (c) to remain in good standing. This requirement applies to current SCW members beginning on the effective date of this issuance, and to new SCW members when they are assigned to an SCW position by the DoD Component. The DoD Component is responsible for updating the SCWD-D so that it accurately reflects the date the assignment begins. Members must meet the following CL requirement:

(a) Basic level: 20 hours of SC-related developmental activities every 2 years, including completion of an annual SC update course offered by DSCU.

(b) Intermediate and advanced levels: 20 hours of SC-related developmental activities every 2 years, including completion of an annual SC update course offered by DSCU. At least 12 of the 20 hours must be focused on maintaining currency in an AoC.

(c) Executive level: 20 hours of SC-related developmental activities every 2 years, including completion of an annual SC update course offered by DSCU.

(3) Completion of certification courses counts toward the CL requirement.

(4) The CL requirement provides an opportunity for DoD Components to introduce DoD Component-specific SC training into the program for their SCW members.

(5) DoD Components will track and maintain a record of the CL activities of their SCW members, including the type of activity, the topic, the source, and the hours required to complete it. Maintaining an accurate CL record is a shared responsibility between SCW members and their supervisors. CL credit for completion of Certification Program courses from DSCU is automatically indicated in the SCWD-D.

(6) DSCA provides the automated certification tracking tool, found on the DSCU website in the “Certification Center” section, to assist SCW members and supervisors with monitoring and recording SC certification activity, including CL submissions.

(7) CL activities must be focused on SC-related topics for the hours to count toward the CL requirement. SCW members should submit their proposed CL activities to their supervisor for approval. A list of appropriate topics is maintained on the DSCU website.

(8) DSCU will review DoD Components’ CL records at least annually to develop lists of recommended courses and other activities on the DSCU website and ensure CL activities are in keeping with Certification Program requirements.

4.3. ESTABLISHING AND MAINTAINING GOOD STANDING.

a. SCW members must maintain good standing in the Certification Program.

b. SCW members who complete required courses by the course completion timeline (see Paragraph 4.2.) and meet the CL requirement are in good standing with the program. SCW members who fail to do so are not in good standing with the program. “Good standing” status is generated automatically and updated in the SCWD-D based on information entered by the relevant DoD Component and DSCU.

c. SCW members who are not in good standing may be subject to adverse personnel action by their DoD Components.

4.4. THE CERTIFICATION PROCESS.

a. Eligibility.

(1) To be eligible for certification, an SCW member must:

(a) Complete all required training in the designated AoC at the designated certification level.

(b) Obtain 1 year of experience in the designated AoC at the designated certification level.

(c) Be in good standing with the program.

(2) SCW members do not need to request to be certified. Once an SCW member is eligible for certification, DSCA automatically updates the SCWD-D to reflect that status.

(3) DoD Components may require Component-specific training for their SCW members in addition to the Certification Program requirements, but the Component-specific requirements will not be factored in when determining if an SCW member is eligible for certification.

(4) SCW members will not be issued a certification at a level above that required for their current position, although they may complete all the training required for higher-level certification to meet CL requirements.

(5) An SCW member who is already certified at one level in an AoC but then transitions to a job with a lower-level certification requirement in the same AoC will remain certified at the higher level as long as he or she continues to meet the CL requirements for the higher-level certification.

(6) Certified SCW members who leave the SCW are not required to maintain their certification. They may, however, choose to do so by continuing to meet the CL requirement.

b. Certification Authority.

(1) The Director, DSCA is the overall authority for the program, but may delegate certification authority to DoD Components with 1,000 or more SCW positions.

(a) For DoD Components with fewer than 1,000 SCW positions, the Director, DSCA is the certification authority. DSCA will issue an electronic copy of the certification document directly to the member via the DSCU website portal.

(b) For DoD Components with 1,000 or more SCW positions, DSCA may delegate certification authority to the Component head, or to the CCA if one is designated by the Component head. The Component head or the CCA must then determine which of their Component's SCW members have completed certification program requirements and are eligible for certification. The DoD Component generates and issues the certification to the SCW member and updates the SCWD-D to reflect that the member is certified within 90 days of issuing the certification. Note that the SCWD-D automatically indicates when an SCW member is eligible for certification.

(2) Once a certification is obtained, the SCW member must maintain it by meeting CL requirements and remaining in good standing as long as the member remains in an SCW position.

c. Certification Equivalency.

(1) Certain non-SCW personnel perform important SC functions but are not part of the statutory SCW including, but not limited to, civilian employees of the United States Coast Guard, foreign service nationals, and locally employed staff. Those personnel are not eligible for certification under this program. Instead, DSCA may grant them a certificate of equivalency when they meet the training and experience requirements for certification in a particular AoC and certification level.

(2) A certificate of equivalency documents that the individual meets the mandatory training and experience requirement for certification in a particular AoC and certification level. Although not an SC certification per se, a certificate of equivalency will have commensurate value within the SCW equivalent to the statutory certification required under this certification program.

SECTION 5: SCW GOVERNANCE

5.1. SCW SSB.

a. The Director, DSCA established the SCW SSB via an April 5, 2019 memorandum to provide strategic direction and oversight of the Security Cooperation Workforce Development Program.

b. The Director, DSCA chairs the SSB.

c. All members of the SCW SSB must be full-time or permanent part-time Federal civilian officers or employees, or Service members. Membership is limited to general or flag officer or senior executive service-level representatives from:

- (1) Each of the offices of the Under Secretaries of Defense.
- (2) The Military Departments and Services.
- (3) The Joint Staff.
- (4) The National Guard Bureau.
- (5) The Unified Combatant Commands.
- (6) The Defense Intelligence Agency.
- (7) The Defense Technology and Security Administration.
- (8) The Defense Threat Reduction Agency.
- (9) The Defense Logistics Agency.
- (10) The Missile Defense Agency.
- (11) The Defense Information Systems Agency.
- (12) The United States Coast Guard.

5.2. OTHER GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES.

a. Below the SCW SSB, the DSCU President chairs the SCW Management Group, with members from the same organizations as the SCW SSB.

b. As needed, DSCA will host working-level meetings with appropriate DoD Component representatives to discuss important Certification Program issues and a way forward to address them before SCW SSB meetings.

GLOSSARY

G.1. ACRONYMS.

ACRONYM	MEANING
AoC	area of concentration
CCA	component certification authority
CL	continuous learning
DISCS	Defense Institute for Security Cooperation Studies
DoDD	DoD directive
DSCA	Defense Security Cooperation Agency
DSCU	Defense Security Cooperation University
SC	security cooperation
SCW	security cooperation workforce
SCWD-D	Security Cooperation Workforce Development Database
SSB	senior steering board
U.S.C.	United States Code

G.2. DEFINITIONS.

Unless otherwise noted, these terms and their definitions are for the purpose of this issuance.

TERM	DEFINITION
key SC positions	SCW billets or positions with duties and responsibilities that require the incumbent to issue guidance, make decisions, or direct SC activities that directly affect the execution of SC programs or activities.
security assistance	Group of programs authorized by Section 2151 et. seq. of Title 22, U.S.C. (also known and referred to in this issuance as “the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961”), Chapter 39, Title 22, U.S.C. (also known and referred to in this issuance as “the Arms Export Control Act of 1976”), or other related statutes by which the United States provides defense articles, military training, and other defense-related services by grant, loan, credit, or cash sale in furtherance of national policies and objectives. Security assistance is funded and authorized by the Department of State and administered by the DSCA. Security assistance is one element of SC.

TERM	DEFINITION
SC	<p>Any program, activity (including exercises), or interaction of DoD with the security establishment of a foreign country to: build and develop allied and friendly security capabilities for self-defense and multinational operations; provide the armed forces with access to the foreign country during peacetime or a contingency operation; or build relationships that promote specific U.S. security interests. This definition encompasses a broad range of activities and programs which include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contacts between DoD officials and officials of foreign security establishments for a purpose defined in Section 301 of Title 10, U.S.C., not including local national labor negotiations.• Exchanges such as the Defense Personnel Exchange Program.• Partner country participation in military exercises, including table-top exercises.• Education, such as partner country personnel attending professional military education and English language training courses.• Training and equipping, and enabling or supporting activities such as transportation and building partnership capacity or foreign military sales case management.• Operational support for partner country security forces.• Defense institution building.• Establishing and fostering intelligence cooperation.• Cooperative research and development. <p>SC also includes security assistance programs and activities such as foreign military sales, Foreign Military Financing and International Military Education and Training programs that are executed by DoD pursuant to the Foreign Assistance Act, the Arms Export Control Act, and other authorities generally aligned with the Department of State.</p>
SCW	<p>Defined in Section 384 of Title 10, U.S.C.</p>

REFERENCES

- DoD Directive 5105.65 “Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA),” October 26, 2012
- DoD Directive 5111.01, “Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (USD(P)),” June 23, 2020
- DoD Directive 5132.03 “DoD Policy and Responsibilities Relating to Security Cooperation,”
December 29, 2016
- Defense Security Cooperation Agency Memorandum, “Department of Defense Security
Cooperation Workforce Senior Steering Board,” April 5, 2019
- United States Code, Title 10
- United States Code, Title 22