Q1: What is the Defense Competency Assessment Tool?

A1: The Defense Competency Assessment Tool (DCAT) is a Department-wide competency assessment tool to validate occupational competency models and assess civilian employees' proficiency levels in the competencies within their occupational series. DCAT will also enable the Department to meet the Title 10 U.S.C. 115b legislative requirement to conduct a biennial assessment of civilian employees' critical skills and competencies needed now and in the future to meet mission requirements. The Initial Operating Capability (IOC) will begin the first quarter of 2014 with a stratified random sampling of civilian employees in mission critical operations (MCOs). The second phase is scheduled for late 2014 and will include civilian employees in the non-MCOs.

Q2: How will the Department use DCAT?

A2: The results of the competency assessments will be used to develop strategies to close identified gaps and inform future training and development plans to effectively manage the Department's civilian workforce. DCAT will support the Department at multiple levels:

- Enterprise level – DCAT will be used to validate all major occupational competency models developed by DoD subject matter experts (SMEs), assess civilian employee proficiency levels required for their individual position, determine Department-wide competency gaps, and meet legislative requirements. The results of the occupational competency assessments will inform future workforce strategies (recruitment, retention and development) and prioritize resources to ensure a capable and ready civilian workforce.
- Component/Agency level – DCAT will be used by Component Heads and OSD Functional Community Managers (OFCMs) to drive workforce strategies to close staffing and competency gaps. DCAT data will also be used for prioritizing resources to efficiently manage Component/Agency talent and inform workforce strategies.
- Supervisor/Manager level – DCAT results will also be used to assist employees in planning for future training/development.
- Employee level – DCAT will be used to identify future training and development opportunities.

Q3: When and how will DCAT be deployed across DoD?

A3: DCAT will be deployed in two phases. The first phase, IOC, is scheduled for the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2014. The IOC will focus on the validation of occupational competency models with a stratified random sample of civilian employees in MCOs. The results of the MCO assessments will be included in the Fiscal Year 2014 DoD Strategic Workforce Plan report to Congress. The second phase will focus on all of the other major occupational series in DoD, to include the validation of the occupational competency

model and a stratified random survey of employees in those series. The plans for the second phase will be determined based on the IOC lessons learned and coordinated with the OFCMs, Component Functional Community Managers (CFCMs) and Component Integrators (CIs).

Q4: Are DoD civilian employees and military personnel required to use DCAT?

A4: Participation is voluntary but strongly encouraged. DCAT was designed and developed to provide a standard method to assess and report DoD General Schedule and equivalent employees' competency gaps. The tool interfaces with the civilian personnel information in the Defense Civilian Personnel Data System (DCPDS). Employees will be randomly selected to participate in DCAT. The Initial Operating Capability (IOC) will begin in November 2013 with a stratified random sample of civilian employees in mission critical operations. Military personnel participation in DCAT is limited to military who supervise civilian employees and who volunteer to complete their employee's competency assessment. They will only use DCAT to assess their civilian employee's competency proficiency levels within their occupational series.

Q5: Why is DOD centralizing competency model development and assessment?

A5: Centralizing competency development and assessment provides a standard and cost efficient methodology for assessing Department-wide civilian workforce competency gaps and identification of current and future workforce competencies. A centralized system also provides a common approach to data analysis and improves accuracy for reporting results that, in turn, will promote more effective strategies for workforce planning, such as competency gap closure and talent management.

Q6: What will happen to existing Component/Agency competency management systems?

A6: DoD has adopted a standard Department-wide competency management system to ensure a consistent approach to assessing civilian workforce competencies, maximize resources, and eliminate redundancy. A phased approach for transitioning existing competency management systems will be developed and sunset dates will be determined in collaboration with the affected Components/Agencies.

Q7: What is the process for developing DoD occupational competency models?

A7: The Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service, Strategic Human Capital Planning Division (DCPAS/SHCPD) is responsible for overseeing the Department's competency model development initiative in collaboration with the Office of Personnel Management Human Resource Solutions' competency development specialists/industrial organizational psychologists. The competency models are developed through a DoD approved job analysis

methodology that includes facilitated DoD subject matter expert (SME) panels and survey samples based on a stratification of the functional population across the Department.

Q8: How often will civilian employees assess their occupational series' competencies?

A8: Generally, every two years, aligned with the biennial legislative reporting requirements. Employees will be selected through stratified random selection methodology to participate in the competency assessment and will be notified by e-mail when their occupational series is open for assessment in DCAT. A stratified random sampling is an approved methodology to collect information from a smaller number of employees in large occupation's series

Q9: Is training available on how to use DCAT?

A9: The DCAT competency assessment is essentially an automated on-line survey. Employees and supervisors will be provided instructions in the tool on how to complete the survey.

Q10: Will employees and supervisors receive information on how to interpret and use the results of the competency assessment?

A10: Yes, a guide will be available for employees to help them understand the results of their competency assessment. The guide will provide information for employees to discuss their results with their supervisor. The guide will also provide suggestions on how to initiate a purposeful discussion about the employee's competency assessment and how to develop a plan for future training and development opportunities to close any indentified gaps and strengthen skill sets. The competency assessment results are only to be used for training and development purposes. Results shall **not** used for performance assessment.

Q11: Is DCAT a learning management system?

A11: No, DCAT was developed to validate DoD occupational competency models and assess workforce competency gaps. It is not a learning management system (LMS).

Q12: Will DCAT integrate with Component learning management systems?

A12: At this time DCAT does not have the capability to integrate with other automated systems. Future capabilities will be considered after DCAT is fully deployed.