MP5301.603-90 Selection, Appointment, and Termination of Appointment of Contracting Officers

(a) Applicability. This MP must be used when selecting, nominating, appointing, and terminating contracting officers (CO) to maximize standardization across the AF. Warrants are issued in accordance with FAR 1.603, DFARS 201.603, 10 U.S.C. § 1724 , DODI 5000.66 , and this MP. Warrants may only be issued for the following values: zero-dollar (administrative warrant for accomplishing zero-dollar, administrative actions only), Simplified Acquisition Threshold (SAT), $5M, $25M, and unlimited. See MP5301.601(a)(i) for identification of the appointing official with the authority to issue and terminate Contracting Officer warrants.

For any DAF military members under administrative control (ADCON) of AFDW and assigned to non-DAF organizations (e.g. DAU, DCMA, DCAA, etc.), the AFICC/CC SCO will serve as the warranting authority.

The authority limitations of this MP do not apply to administrative terminations (for retirement or separation) or administrative documentation relating to warrant transfers. Authority to sign this documentation is delegable to no lower than the COCO, the Chief of the Clearance and Program Support Division, or Chief of Policy.

(b) Warranting. An individual selected for contracting officer appointment must be a military member in Air Force Specialty Code (AFSC) 64PX or 6C0X1 or a civilian in the GS-1102 occupational series who occupies a manned authorization listed under these specialty codes/series, and complies with the requirements at DFARS 201.603-2 and this MP.

(c) Focal Point (FP). FPs must be designated in writing via the FP designation form and may be assigned unlimited or limited duties as indicated in the Warrant Process Focal Point Designation Form . Each SCO is responsible for appointing FPs and must designate at least one FP with full duties. SCOs may delegate authority to appoint limited FPs to the COCO. This authority is not further delegable. Follow the form instructions when appointing FPs.

(d) AF CO Warrant Tracking Tool. All warrants are entered into and tracked via the AF CO Warrant Tracking Tool (AFCOWTT). FPs obtain access to the AFCOWTT by submitting a copy of the Warrant Process Focal Point Designation Form to HQ AFMC/PK. Prior to obtaining access, FPs must request training on the use of the AFCOWTT by contacting HQ AFMC/PK, as applicable. FPs are responsible for entering all warrant data into the tool, and for uploading warrants (SF1402s) (and up to three past SF1402s), a copy of the Contracting Officer Test (COT) certificate, and the Contracting Officer Appointment/Warrant Eligibility Transfer/Termination Request (COWER). FPs also administer all other warrant actions and are responsible for maintaining current, accurate, and complete warrant data in the AFCOWTT, including ensuring that allmandatory attachments are uploaded for each warrant holder, including the SF-1402, the COT certificate, and a copy of the completed COWER. A new warrant threshold requires a new warrant number; If a new warrant is obtained (for example, someone’s warrant threshold is increased from $5M to $25M, or someone obtains an Unlimited Warrant where a Limited Warrant was previously held), a new Warrant Number will be assigned. The old warrant will be placed in an “Inactive” status and the new warrant with new Warrant Number will be created and set to “Active” status. A new warrant number is not necessary in the

case of someone changing their official name with no change to their warrant threshold; administrative changes do not require a new warrant number.

(e) CO Warrant Nomenclature. All transferable warrants shall list “Department of the Air Force” on the ‘Organization’ and ‘Agency/Department’ lines of the SF1402. All transferable warrants are numbered as follows: the first two positions are “AF”, the third and fourth positions are the last two digits of the fiscal year (FY) in which the appointment is made, and positions 5-9 are obtained from the identification (ID) field of the AFCOWTT; for example, in FY21 an ID field number of 12345 would yield an appointment number of AF-21-12345. Current transferable warrants will be updated through attrition. All new non-transferable warrants will be numbered as follows: Organization-FY-XXXXX e.g., SSC-21-12499 for SSC; last 5 positions are obtained from the ID field of the AFCOWTT.

(f) Nominating Warrant Candidates. Warrant candidates are nominated by a candidate sponsor who shall be no lower than the candidate’s first level supervisor. Submit warrant nominations to the designated FP using the COWER.

(g) Contracting Officer Test. Candidates for warrants above the simplified acquisition threshold (SAT) must pass the two-hour timed, open book COT by achieving a minimum score of 80%.

(1) The COT is a proctored, computer-generated test containing 25 randomly selected true/false and multiple-choice questions from the FAR, DFARS, and/or DAFFARS. Each question is worth up to two points.

(2) During the COT, candidates are limited to the use of electronic regulations available via www.acquisition.gov and hard copies of the FAR and DFARS (free of tabs and notes); however, hard copies will not be provided. Notes and electronic devices are not permitted in the testing site. Use of email, instant messaging, or any other form of electronic communication is prohibited during the COT.

(3) Candidates must provide the correct answer and the correct, associated complete reference (e.g., FAR 15.401(a)(2)(i)(B)), in order to earn two points. If the candidate answers the question correctly but provides an incorrect reference, one point will be received. If the candidate answers the question incorrectly but the reference correctly, the candidate will not receive any points as this indicates a failure to understand the regulation. The COT is automatically and electronically scored.

i. If the candidate fails to pass the COT, the candidate may challenge missed questions and/or references in accordance with the Proctor User Guide only when approval of the challenge would result in a passing score. (NOTE: Access to the guide is restricted to warrant focal points.)

ii. A candidate who fails the COT may retake it if authorized by their immediate supervisor and space is available. If the candidate fails to pass the COT on the second attempt, the candidate may not retake the COT until a three-month waiting period has passed.

iii. Supervisors are authorized to approve a maximum of two continuous learning points per 12-month period for an individual who completes the COT, whether for a warrant request action or for training purposes.

(4) Practice COT: A practice test titled Contracting Officer Demo Test - C10979 was developed to help familiarize warrant candidates with the question structure of the COT. The practice test is available via the myLearning site. It is a non-proctored, 50-minute, timed test consisting of ten questions which are electronically and randomly selected from a 20-question pool. There is no limit on the number of times the practice COT may be taken. The completion of a practice test shall not be used as the basis for warrant eligibility.

(h) Warrant Boards. Warrant boards are reserved exclusively for warrants exceeding $25M and are used to further assess the candidate's experience, qualifications, communication skills, and overall demeanor.

(1) Warrant boards must be chaired by the appointing official or designee at a level no lower than:

i. Deputy Director or Assistant Director of Contracting;

ii. Technical Director/Assistant to the Director of Contracting;

(2) Warrant boards must have a minimum of five members, including the board chairperson, participating to constitute a quorum. Suggested board composition includes:

i. Contracting office supervisors;

ii. Representative from the staff judge advocate office;

iii. Competition Advocate;

iv. Clearance/program support procurement analyst;

v. Small business specialist/liaison;

vi. Supervisors/Directors/Deputy Directors from other disciplines; and/or

vii. Cost/Price Analyst

(3) Warrant board members may be held in person by teleconference, or video conference at the discretion of the board chairperson.

(4) The warrant candidate must correctly answer and/or discuss no fewer than 10 questions, seven of which must be obtained from the scenario-based AF question repository. To obtain access to the question repository, submit the Warrant Process Focal Point Designation Form to HQ AFMC/PK. The appointing official has the discretion to develop new questions(s) for the remaining three questions, which may be scenario- or knowledge-based. The board shall include questions that address PEO, Enterprise, and Operational portfolios, as well as pricing, fiscal law, contract law, legal, and problem solving.

(5) The appointing official (See Section a), in consultation with the board members, may appoint an unlimited warrant, a limited warrant, or none. Individuals awarded an unlimited warrant as a result of a warrant board shall not be required to sit before the board again, except in the case of a reappointment after a termination for cause (See Para. (s)).

(i) Unlimited Warrants. Unlimited warrants require a minimum of two years of contracting experience, a baccalaureate degree, successful completion of the COT and passing a warrant board. Additionally, unlimited warrant candidates, at a minimum, shall possess the DoD Contracting Professional Certification (Back-to-Basics) or legacy DAWIA Contracting certification. All unlimited warrants are transferable across the AF.

(j) Limited Transferable Warrants. Warrants limited by a monetary threshold are transferable across the DAF. A Limited Warranted CO shall not sign contract documents associated with award, to include RFPs and D&Fs, above the dollarized warrant limitation. Dollarized warrant limitations apply to all contract award documentation and to the value of the instant contract action a CO

isexecuting. For example, if a CO holds a limited warrant of $5M and the contract award amount of the instant action is $6M, the CO is not authorized to sign the contract action.

(1) For zero-dollar and SAT limited warrants, contracting personnel (including purchasing agents in theGS-1105 series) must have at least one year of contracting experience.

(2) For $5M limited warrants, contracting personnel must have a minimum of two years of contracting experience, DoD Contracting Professional Certification (i.e., successful completion of the Contracting Certification Exam at DAU) or legacy DAWIA Contracting certification (Level I, II, or III), and have successfully completed the COT. Warrant boards shall not be convened for warrants within this threshold.

(3) For $25M limited warrants, contracting personnel must have a minimum oftwo years of contracting experience, DoD Contracting Professional Certification (i.e., successful completion of the Contracting Certification Exam at DAU) or legacy DAWIA Contracting certification (Level I, II, or III), successfulcompletion of the COT, and vetting process established by the appointing official and documented on the COWER. Warrant boards shall not be convened for warrants within this threshold.

(k) Local National (LN) Warrants. LNs in an equivalent occupational series to GS-1102 may be selected for a contracting officer appointment in accordance with this MP. LN candidates for zero-dollar and SAT limited warrants must meet the same requirements for zero dollar and SAT warrants described in para (j)(1). LN candidates for $5M and $25M limited warrants must have successfully completed the COT, possess a baccalaureate degree and a minimum of two years of contracting experience, and shall complete all contracting courses required for DoD Contracting Professional Certification (LNs do not have access to the system for the certification portion) or shall possess legacy DAWIA Contracting certification (Level I, II, or III). LN Unlimited Warrant candidates must meet all of the requirements described in this paragraph for $5M and $25M limited LN Warrants and must also pass a warrant board. All LN Warrants are non-transferable.

(l) Contingency Contracting Force. In accordance with 10 USC 1724 and DODI 5000.66, a member of the contingency contracting force in AFSC 6C0X1 and 6C000 who do not possess a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution may be nominated, evaluated, and selected for a zero dollar (administrative warrant for accomplishing zero-dollar, administrative actions only), SAT, $5M, or $25M limited warrant provided that the individual meets all other requirements for the warrant type and dollar value described in paragraph (j). Since all active duty enlisted members of the DAF Contracting AFSCs 6C0X1 and 6C000 who are serving in an Air Force acquisition coded position are members of the Contingency Contracting Force, regardless of the place of duty performance or the position held, there is no need to issue a separate Contingency Contracting Officer warrant. Military and Civilian personnel with an active DAF warrant may use their existing warrant in support of both non-contingency and Contingency Operations.

(m) Non-Transferable Warrants. Non-transferable warrants may be issued for specific functions or buying activities (e.g., contract closeout, defective pricing actions, funding modifications, administrative modifications, specific contracts, units, etc.) Candidates for zero-dollar and SAT warrants must meet the same requirements for the warrant type and dollar value described in paragraph (j)(1). Candidates for limited non-transferable warrants valued at $5M must meet the same requirements for the warrant type and dollar value described in paragraph (j)(2); however, in the case of a non-transferable $5M warrant limited strictly to incremental funding-only and/or admin-only actions, passage of the COT is recommended but not required. Candidates for limited non-transferable warrants valued at $25M must meet the same requirements for the warrant type and dollar value described in paragraph (j)(3). The SF1402 must clearly state “Limited Non-

Transferable Warrant" and cite the specific warrant limitations.

(n) Warrant Transfer and Reinstatement.

(1) Warrants issued in accordance with this MP, except for those issued in accordance with paragraphs (l) and (m) above, are transferable across the DAF. As long as a warrant is in good standing, an individual shall not be required to test or board again. However, warrant transferability does not guarantee immediate utilization, as the gaining appointing official (see paragraph (g)(1)) may determine that time is needed to facilitate familiarity with new workload responsibilities and organizational procedures. When a Contracting Officer moves from one organization to another, the losing organization's FP shall change the affected warrant record to Inactive and annotate any pertinent information in the notes. The gaining FP shall review the incoming Contracting Officer's warrant record to ensure it is current, accurate, complete, and in good standing. Further instructions regarding electronically transferring a warrant to a new organization are located in the AFCOWTT.

(2) Warrant reinstatement is applicable to an individual who previously held an AF warrant and whose warrant was subsequently terminated for reasons such as reassignment or resignation. A request to reinstate an AF warrant must be submitted to the appointing official for approval through the designated FP using the COWER. The appointing official shall document their assessment and rationale for warrant reinstatement on the COWER.

(o) Grandfathered Contracting Officers. Current COs are not required to be tested, boarded, or reappointed as a result of the issuance of, or changes to, this MP; however, those with limited non-transferable or limited transferable warrants must meet the requirements of this MP to obtain a transferable and/or higher dollar value warrant.

(p) Warrants Issued Based on External Warrant Credentials. A new AF 1102 with external, federal government CO experience may be issued an DAF warrant without meeting the requirements of this MP (COT and vetting process or warrant board) based on the discretion of the appointing official, provided they meet the qualification requirements at DFARS 201.603-2. The appointing official must conduct an assessment of the candidate's qualifications and experience prior to the issuance of a DAF warrant. The appointing official shall document the rationale for appointment on the COWER (See sample criteria.)

(q) Warrant Reciprocity. In December 2023, the Assistant Secretaries of the Air Force and the Army(Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics) signed Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), Cross-Service Contingency Warranting Procedures,between the two Departments. This MOA, which expires in December 2033, established a warrant reciprocity relationship during contingency operations as defined in l 0 U.S.C. § l01(a)(13), or in support of an emergency or major disaster as defined in 42 U.S.C. § 5122, or as otherwise directed by the Secretary of Defense in support of U.S. government-led operations (hereinafter, "contingency operations"). The MOA mandates recognition of cross-service warrants and qualifications for both military and civilian personnel and requires each services' Head of the Contracting Activity (or delegated warranting authority) to recognize cross-service warrants and the qualifications and thresholds identified therein without additional testing, assessments, or issuinga new warrant. The intent of this MOA is to enable the lead Service for a contingency operation to avoid delays in providing expeditionary contracting support.

(r) Reissuance of Warrant Certificates. A request to reissue an existing warrant certificate for administrative purposes (e.g., damage to or deterioration of the original SF1402, name changes, etc.) is not a new appointment and may be submitted directly to the FP for processing to the appropriate appointing official; use of the COWER is not required. (s)

(s) Warrant Suspension or Termination for Cause. Warrants may be suspended or terminated for unsatisfactory performance. The appointing official may suspend a warrant in writing until proficiency is demonstrated to the satisfaction of the appointing official. If a warrant is terminated for cause, the candidate must be reappointed in accordance with paragraphs (i), (j), or (k) of this MP, to include a warrant board for reappointment of an unlimited warrant.

(t) Contracting Officer's Signature. The Contracting Officer's wet and digital signature must match the name listed on the SF1402, as should the Contracting Officer's signature block.

Parent topic: MP5301.6 - CAREER DEVELOPMENT, CONTRACTING AUTHORITY, AND RESPONSIBILITIES