This document is subject to updates. Current version: December 17, 2025.

> This frequently asked questions (FAQs) document describes the SCW Certification 2.0 Program and how it will be implemented. The authoritative document defining Certification 2.0 requirements is the "[Final Guidelines for the Department of Defense Security Cooperation Workforce Certification Program 2.0.](#)"

Certification Overview

What is Certification 2.0?

The SCW Certification 2.0 Program, an element of the Department of Defense (DOD) SCW Development Program— Human Capital Initiative (SCWDP-HCI) prescribed by Title 10 U.S. Code Section 384, is required to ensure DOD personnel assigned to statutorily defined Security Cooperation Workforce (SCW) positions have the competency-based training and experience necessary to carry out assigned security cooperation responsibilities. Certification 2.0 requires all members of the workforce, including new and long-standing members, to obtain appropriate professional, proficiency-based certification primarily determined by rank/grade.

Why is Certification 2.0 being implemented?

DOD security cooperation education, training, and certification underwent a year-long reevaluation in 2022, which allowed for refinement of the DSCU curriculum and DOD SCW certification requirements. This assessment resulted in a completely revamped program, Certification 2.0.

The new certification requirements are tailored to the SCW's competency needs, the current strategic reality, and answer tasks mandated by Congress. Developing a professional SCW requires competency-based education and training focused on job-specific knowledge, skills, and abilities.

How are Certification 2.0 and the previous certification program different?

Certification 2.0 replaces a legacy program.

The most significant changes embodied in Certification 2.0 include new, competency-based curriculum and a requirement to properly code SCW positions in manpower systems of record to reflect these enhancements. The following changes were also made:

- Adding Capability Development as a core competency.
- Replacing 5 Areas of Concentration (AOCs) with 9 Functional Areas to recognize a much-expanded and diversified workforce.
- Redefining the certification proficiency levels (Foundational, Practitioner, Expert, and Executive).
- Prescribing proficiency levels by military rank and civilian grade.

When does Certification 2.0 begin and what are the deadlines?

Certification 2.0 initiated a rolling start on September 30, 2023.

Beginning October 1, 2025, SCW members are required to complete certification courses by the following deadlines:

- Foundational-level certification: One year to complete all required Foundational-level requirements (October 1, 2026). Note, all SCW members require at least Foundational -level certification, including those designated in the Support Enablers functional area.
    - Practitioner-level certification: Two years to complete all required Practitioner-level requirements (October 1, 2027).
    - Expert-level certification: Two years to complete all Expert-level requirements (October 1, 2027).

Certification 2.0 courses completed in 2024 remain valid for Certification 2.0 credit to include successful completion of "Beta Test" courses. For personnel who join the SCW after October 1, 2025, their timelines will begin on the day that they enter the SCW, which will be indicated by the DOD Component linking an individual to a coded SCW billet/position in the appropriate Military Department or Fourth Estate manpower system of record.

How is the SCW defined? Who is included in the SCW?

All members of the SCW—which includes members of the armed forces and civilian employees of the DOD who perform Security Cooperation functions—are required to be identified in the manpower systems of record and fully participate in the Certification Program. Security cooperation certification is a condition of employment for civilians and an order for service members.

10 U.S.C Section 384(j) (1)-(6) defines the DOD SCW as:

1. Members of the armed forces and civilian employees of the DOD working in the security cooperation organizations of United States missions overseas.
2. Members of the armed forces and civilian employees of the DOD in the geographic combatant commands and functional combatant commands responsible for planning, monitoring, or conducting security cooperation activities.
3. Members of the armed forces and civilian employees of the DOD in the military departments performing security cooperation activities, including activities in connection with the acquisition and development of technology release policies.
4. Other military and civilian personnel of Defense Agencies and Field Activities who perform security cooperation activities.
5. Personnel of the DOD who perform assessments, monitoring, or evaluations of security cooperation programs and activities of the DOD.
6. Other members of the armed forces or civilian employees of the DOD who contribute significantly to the security cooperation programs and activities of the DOD by virtue of their assigned duties.

Are DOD contractors required to be certified in Certification 2.0?

According to 10 U.S.C Section 384(j) definition, DOD contractors are not defined as part of SCW. The SCW does not include private sector employees providing services under contract with DOD (e.g., "contractors"). As a result, resources have not been allocated for their certification nor do contractors currently have certification requirements. Personnel who are not in a DOD security cooperation position will not be eligible for certification. DSCU is currently developing a policy for requests for exceptions for SCW training.

Program Structure

What are the new proficiency levels within Certification 2.0?

The new proficiency levels within Certification 2.0 are Level I Foundational, Level II Practitioner, Level III Expert, and Level IV Executive. Certification 2.0 requires all members of the workforce, including new and long-standing members, to obtain appropriate professional, proficiency-based certification primarily determined by rank/grade.

Certification Level IV: Executive

Certification Level III: Expert

Certification Level II: Practitioner

Certification Level I: Awareness/Foundational

	1/2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	SES
GS															
OFF							O-1/2	O-1/2	O-2/3	O-3/4	O-4	O-4/5	O-5	O-6	O-7/8/9
WO								W-1/2	W-2/3	W-3/4	W-4/5	W-5			
ENL	E-1/2/3		E-4/5	E-5/6	E-6/7	E-7/8	E-8	E-8/9	E-8/9	E-8/9	E-8/9				E-9 Nom

GS: General Schedule   OFF: Officer   WO: Warrant Officer   ENL: Enlisted   SES: Senior Exec Service

This construct does not apply to support functions, who only need Level 1 certification

If I am Level 2, Practitioner, do I have to complete Level 1 requirements?

No, Certification 2.0 is a tailored approach according to proficiency level. For example, if your position is coded as a Level 2 Practitioner, you do not complete Level 1 then Level 2; you will complete Level 2 Practitioner requirements. If your position is coded as a Level 3 Expert, you do not complete Levels 1, 2, and then 3; you will complete Level 3 Expert requirements.

What are the nine new Functional Areas?

One of the foundational enhancements of Certification 2.0 is the introduction and implementation of nine Functional Areas. Each position in the SCW will be assigned a functional area and a proficiency level by the respective DOD Component. These assignments help to ensure that SCW members take the competency-based courses that best meet the requirements of their assigned positions.

Functional Areas

(A) Policy and Resourcing
(B) Foreign Military Sales and Financing
(C) Security Cooperation Organization
(D) Support Enablers *FM, HR, Legal, IT
(E) Acquisition
(F) Building Partner Capacity/DOD Train and Equip
(G) Advise, Train, and Educate
(H) State Partnership Program
(I) Assessment, Monitoring, and Evaluation

*Complete definitions for the Functional Areas are in the "Final Guidelines for the Department of Defense Security Cooperation Workforce Certification Program 2.0." , pages 5-6.

What are the SCW Competencies?

The anchor of Certification 2.0 and corresponding curriculum are the ten security cooperation competencies. With the competencies as the guide, the new DSCU curriculum is intended to develop a common set of skills and knowledge in specific segments of the workforce.

The competencies were agreed to by the security cooperation enterprise in 2018. Certification 2.0 features mandatory competencies at each level of certification. The ten Certification 2.0 SCW Competencies can be found in the "Final Guidelines for the Department of Defense Security Cooperation Workforce Certification Program 2.0."

What are the core competencies?

The core competencies are

- Capability Development
- Political-Military Activities
- Security, Foreign Disclosure, and End-Use Controls
- Country/Regional Orientation and Awareness, for Levels II (Practitioner) and III (Expert)
- Foundations of Security Cooperation for Level I (Foundational)

What are Secondary Functional Areas for Practitioners and Experts?

A secondary functional area is foundational-level course that a Practitioner or Expert (Level 2 or Level 3) SCW member selects to broaden their Security Cooperation knowledge. The secondary functional area is different from the primary functional area and ensures Practitioners and Experts take competency-based courses that assist with professional development. SCW members should discuss Secondary Functional Areas with their supervisors. Secondary Functional Areas are not part of the Security Cooperation Position code, and they will vary from SCW member to SCW member – even SCW members with the same position description may select/enroll in different Secondary Functional Areas. See the list of Secondary Functional Area Training courses on the Certification Pathway Fact Sheets.

Billet Coding

How will SCW members be identified/coded?

All security cooperation positions must be coded in their manpower systems of record. Proper coding ensures SCW members take the competency-based courses that best meet the requirements of their assigned positions.

A Security Cooperation Position Coding Guide has been provided to help Components identify their SCW members functional areas and certification proficiency levels. The Coding Guide assists the Military Departments, Fourth Estate, and other organizations with coding the SCW correctly. DOD Components should conduct an initial review of certification levels and ensure positions are coded in the appropriate Military Department or Fourth Estate manpower system of record.

Components and the Fourth Estate will provide coding information to DSCU in proper data format at routine intervals. SC Codes include the following information:

- Security Cooperation (this is a security cooperation position)
- Key/Not Key and Military/Civilian
- Functional Area (See table 1 below, Coded A-I)
- Proficiency Level Required (Foundational, Practitioner, Expert, Executive)

How do I find out my position/billet's SC Code?

Workforce members should contact their supervisor and/or Component Certification Authority with questions concerning their position coding and/or personnel data in systems of record. SCW position codes are reflected in the appropriate manpower system of record and myDSCU, the Learning Management System (LMS).

What is the process to request a waiver to certify at a different proficiency level than the proficiency level indicated by the billet's grade/rank?

There is a waiver process; however, waivers should be an exception and not the norm. One of the challenges revealed by the year-long assessment of the legacy certification program was that approximately 50% of the SCW was coded "Basic." For the SCW to realize its potential to become a more efficient and effective enterprise, SCW members must be trained and certified at the appropriate proficiency level.

The Certification 2.0 Proficiency-Level Waiver Request process allows position owners to propose upgrades and downgrades to prescribed proficiency-levels of positions within the SCW. Additionally, Certification 2.0 Waiver Process Map illustrates the waiver process, and the Action Memo must be completed by the position owners to recommend and route a proficiency-level waiver. The Certification 2.0 proficiency-level waiver process allows position owners to propose upgrades and downgrades to prescribed proficiency-levels of positions within the SCW. Various data listed in the Certification 2.0 Proficiency-Level Waiver Request are considered when assessing a waiver request. The DSCU President is the approval authority for waiver requests.

How are Support Enablers, such as technology support or administrative support, coded and assigned functional areas?

SCW Support Enabler personnel require security cooperation awareness. Support Enablers (Functional Area "D") can only be coded as Level I, Foundational. Support enablers do not have to complete a Primary functional area. DSCU will offer specialized modules/courses for legal and financial management professionals working in security cooperation.

What are the options for SCW members who are initially identified as Functional Area "D" Support Enablers, who supervisors determine, based on the specific roles and responsibilities of the position, require a greater understanding of Security Cooperation beyond the Foundational Proficiency Level?

Supervisors should identify and code SCW positions based on the unique duties and responsibilities of each position. Supervisors are most familiar with the unique requirements for their SCW members and should identify and code positions to meet those requirements. DSCU's SCWDP-HCI recommends a

conversation between supervisors and SCW members to determine the appropriate SCW code to account for the actual duties and responsibilities of each position.

Within Certification 2.0, specific acknowledgement was made for Support Enablers who benefit from a foundational knowledge of security cooperation but not do require advanced training and education to perform their duties. Therefore, Support Enablers (code FA-D) will only receive Foundational proficiency-level certification regardless of the rank/grade of the position. In instances where SCW members require advanced training, education, and certification beyond the Foundational proficiency-level, another FA may be more appropriate.

Who is the final authority in determining the Functional Area for positions?

It is the responsibility of the Component to select the appropriate Functional Area for the duties and responsibilities of the position/billet and to code the position/billet in the appropriate manpower system of record. Consistent with the legacy certification program, the determination should include a conversation with component leadership, the supervisor, and the SCW member. [See the "Certification Authority" section on page 13 in the "Final Guidelines for the Department of Defense Security Cooperation Workforce Certification Program 2.0." for more clarifying details.]

Training and Courses

How do I register for courses?

Registration: Full registration instructions can be found in the Student Task Aid. An abbreviated version is as follows:

- Log in to myDSCU, select the green "Access Your Training" image, or, hover over the "Learning" tab and select "View Your Transcript."
- Select your SC Certification from your transcript.
- The Certification Details will list required courses with the options to request, launch, or open curriculum.

Who will receive priority registration for instructor-led courses?

Demand for certain resident courses may exceed the classroom/seat capacity at DSCU, particularly in the first years of Certification 2.0. To ensure prioritization of SCW personnel most in need of certain courses, course registration for Certification 2.0 courses will typically be prioritized as follows:

1. DOD personnel assigned to Key SCW Positions taking a course that is required for certification.
   2. DOD personnel assigned to Key SCW positions taking a course that is not required for certification but that is deemed necessary by the DOD Component based on the developmental needs of the person to fill the Key SCW position.
   3. DOD personnel not in Key SCW positions taking a course required for certification.
   4. DOD personnel assigned to SCW positions (but not to Key SCW positions) taking a course for any other purpose.

Will there be test-through options?

Yes, some Certification 2.0 curriculum offer test-through options. However, all members of the SCW are required to satisfy requirements for their Certification 2.0 proficiency level.

Test-through options allow 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.

Do SCW civilian members have specific training requirements?

The Certification 2.0 program requires civilian SCW members take leadership training appropriate to their grade, based on the DOD Civilian Leader Development Continuum and corresponding to their proficiency level. These training offerings will be available for all levels as online trainings (OLTs) or Virtual Instructor-Led Courses (VILTs).

My component issued me a Security Cooperation certification; does it count and/or is it transferable?
No, these are not transferable, nor do they count toward Certification 2.0 requirements. Components and services can add requirements for their personnel but cannot subtract from Certification 2.0. Component training and education may assist members in testing through of certain requirements; however, individuals must complete the required curriculum or test through.

Is there a course equivalency list? Do past classes count toward my new certification within Certification 2.0?
DSCU has completely revamped the curriculum to acknowledge the current strategic reality, prepare the SCW to represent the U.S. to Partner Nations, and ensure a professionalized security cooperation force, with the training and support necessary to advance national security objectives. Therefore, completing the new curriculum or testing through according to the functional areas is a requirement.
SCW members must complete required courses for Certification 2.0 that are based on the assigned functional area and Certification 2.0 proficiency level.
Many SCW members have completed training previously. Those members often possess significant knowledge and experience regarding security cooperation topics. The Certification Program 2.0 is structured to acknowledge that training via test through options and continuous learning requirements.

Certification Completion Requirements

What are the experience requirements within Certification 2.0?
SCW members must obtain one year of successful experience in the appropriate FA at the appropriate level (Awareness/Foundational, Practitioner, Expert, or Executive) to be eligible for certification, starting from the individual's entry on duty (EOD) date. If the SCW member completes the course work and receives a performance review of "satisfactory" (or equivalent) or higher, they will receive credit for experience. Supervisors will verify SCW member experience in myDSCU using the Certification 2.0 Supervisor Task Aid.

Once I have completed Certification 2.0, how do I retrieve my certificate?
Once SCW member have successfully completed the required courses for the designated Functional Area (FA) and Proficiency Level (e.g., Foundational, Practitioner, Expert), the supervisor must verify the members experience and satisfactory performance rating in myDSCU, see the Certification 2.0 Supervisor Task Aid for supervisor instructions. Upon supervisor's validation, the SCW member will be able to access and download the Certification 2.0 certificate. Please refer to the Student Task Aid for a step-by-step guide to retrieve the certificate.

For SCW members, how do I add my supervisor to myDSCU profile?
Complete instructions can be found in the Student Task Aid.
To add your supervisor to your myDSCU profile, follow these steps:
1. Log in to your myDSCU account
2. From the center of the page select "User Record Update Request")
3. Scroll down to the bottom of the form to see the Manager field.
4. Select the box to search and select your supervisor. TIP: For best results, search using your supervisor's email address.
5. Click "Submit" to save your changes

As a supervisor, what is the process to verify and approve a SCW member's eligibility for Certification 2.0?
Please see the Certification 2.0 Supervisor Task Aid for supervisor instructions Once your subordinates have completed all the required courses for their designated Functional Area (FA) and Proficiency Level

(e.g., Foundational, Practitioner, Expert), the assigned supervisor must validate their subordinates experience and performance in MyDSCU.

1. Verify that SCW member subordinates have identified you as their supervisor in myDSCU (hosted on DAU's CSOD)
2. Log in to your myDSCU account
3. Select the "Learning" dropdown menu (top left)
4. Choose "Observation Checklists" (you'll see a list of your SCW subordinates)
5. Select the applicable student
6. Select DSCU Certification 2.0: Satisfactory Performance Validation
7. From the Rating Dropdown menu Select 1- Meets Criteria
8. Select Save

Your subordinates should now be able to retrieve their Certification 2.0 Certificate.

I completed DSCU courses prior to the curriculum update, will those courses count toward my certification?

Due to the refreshed curriculum, courses taken before December 31, 2023, do not count toward Certification 2.0 certification requirements; however, these courses have been important for security cooperation assignment preparation. Additionally, the knowledge gained in these courses may support test through options within the new curriculum.

Does Certification 2.0 require those previously certified in the old program to re-certify in Certification 2.0?

Yes, all SCW members must be coded in systems of record and complete new curriculum requirements. Certification 2.0 courses completed in 2024 remain valid for Certification 2.0 credit to include successful completion of "Beta Test" courses.

The security cooperation community is committed to a fair and equitable way of levying the new requirements within Certification 2.0. Certification 2.0 and the corresponding DSCU curriculum have been updated to address the current security cooperation landscape, which has significantly changed in the past three years.

Examples:
1. *I am a GS-13 previously certified as basic; do I need to recertify?* Yes, as a GS-13 you will now be classified as either a Level 2, Practitioner or a Level 3 Expert (unless you are a Support Enabler) depending on consultation with your supervisor and/or Component Certification Authority. You will start your Certification 2.0 at Level 2 or 3 (completing Level 1 courses first is not a requirement).
2. *I am a 0-6 and attended a DSCU executive education course in 2021, am I certified as an Executive?* DSCU Executive Education courses under Certification 2.0 are only available to General Officer, civilian SES, and nominative E-9 personnel. As an O-6 you will need to certify as a Level 3, Expert.
3. *I am an E-7 certified at the previous "Intermediate" level; do I need to recertify?* Yes, as a Level 2 Practitioner, you will be required to complete the new Level 2 Practitioner courses. Test through options will be available within the new curriculum.

Continuous Learning Requirements

Once I receive Certification 2.0 credentials, am I certified for life?

Security cooperation is a constantly evolving field that requires continuous learning. Certification 2.0 credentials will remain if individuals maintain their continuous learning requirements. If an individual changes positions or assignments, additional requirements may apply.

What are the continuous learning requirements for Certification 2.0?

Continuous learning will help ensure that SCW members remain up to date **after** they achieve certification. Continuous learning requirements are a prescribed number of hours, according to certification proficiency level.

SCW members must meet the following continuous learning requirements every two years to **maintain** certification:

- Level 1, Foundational – 40 hours of security cooperation-related developmental opportunities every 2 years, which can include completion of other DSCU course offerings including electives.
- Level 2, Practitioner – 60 hours hours of security cooperation-related developmental opportunities every 2 years, which can include completion of other DSCU course offerings including electives.
- Level 3, Expert – 80 hours hours of security cooperation-related developmental opportunities every 2 years, which can include completion of other DSCU course offerings including electives.

What qualifies as continuous learning hours required for Certification 2.0?

For Continuous learning activities and hours to count toward requirements they must be focused on Security Cooperation-related topics. Continuous learning activities include, but are not limited to:

1. Academic courses offered by DSCU and other DoW, U.S. Government, and private sector academic institutions.
2. External continuous learning, such as:
   - Functional (job skills) training courses offered by, or on behalf of, DoW Components.
   - Other professional activities, including active participation in seminars, lectures, symposia, conferences, workshops, research, and publishing in the field of Security Cooperation.
   - Job shadowing and other formal professional mentoring.

SCW members who are also part of other DoW certification programs (e.g., Defense Acquisition Workforce or Financial Management) may receive continuous learning credit in both certification programs if the continuous learning activity meets the requirements for both programs.

Full instructions can be found in the Student Task Aid.

How do I receive credit for Continuous Learning Hours required for Certification 2.0?

Full instructions can be found in the Student Task Aid.

Certification 2.0 Program Authority

Who is the Security Cooperation Certification 2.0 authority?

In accordance with 10 U.S.C § 384, DSCA established the SCWDP Program Office within DSCU, which is the overall authority for the program and is responsible for, among other things:

- Program standards, including prescribing (but not assigning) the functional areas, certification levels, and required courses.
- Waiver authority for mandatory courses, experience, and continous learning requirements.
- Assessments and audits of SCW data.
- Approval of security cooperation curriculum.

What is the SCW governance structure?

In August 2023 the DOD officially designated Security Cooperation as a Functional Community with the assignment of an Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) Security Cooperation Functional Community Manager: Assistant Secretary of Defense for Strategy, Plans, and Capabilities (ASD SPC).
The establishment of the SCW as a Functional Community provides a governance structure to engage in workforce planning and management, review and update agreed competency models and assess workforce competencies, identify mission-critical gaps, and identify and implement recruitment, development, and retention initiatives for the SCW.

What are the intentions, plans, and roadmap regarding SCWD-D and a future SCW automated Information System?

SCWD-D was sunset in March 2024. Therefore, it is imperative that all SCW positions are correctly coded in the appropriate system of record. The future Management Information System (MIS) is being developed by DSCA/DSCU in conjunction with the Security Cooperation Functional Community.

Who pays for my courses?

The DSCU Budget Office no longer administers student travel funds, but funds may still be acquired through the DOD Component's funding process if needed from DSCA. Students should coordinate with their Component's detailers or appropriate budget office to acquire travel funds. Student travel will be administered through the students' respective organization, per their rules and regulations. Questions regarding other travel-related budget issues may be directed to the DSCU Registrar at dsca.ncr.dscu.list.registrars@mail.mil.

Is there a Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) outlining Certification 2.0?

DSCA and DSCU have begun the process of amending the Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 5132.15, "Implementation of the Security Cooperation Workforce Certification Program," to reflect the new program, as well as to incorporate the broader mandates of the workforce development effort. Certification 2.0 requirements will be reflected in an updated DoDI on the Security Cooperation Workforce Development Program (SCWDP).

Who should I contact for more information?

- If you are part of the SCW and have questions about certification, please contact dsca.ncr.fo.mbx.scwdd@mail.mil.
- If you are part of the SCW and have questions about DSCU courses or registering for DSCU courses, please contact dsca.ncr.dscu.list.registrars@mail.mil.
- If are in need of information technology assistance on DSCU websites, including Cornerstone on Demand, please contact or dsca.ncr.dscu.mbx.dscu-support@mail.mil.
- If you are a Security Cooperation stakeholder or member of the media and have a query, please contact dsca.dscu.info@mail.mil.