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PULSE

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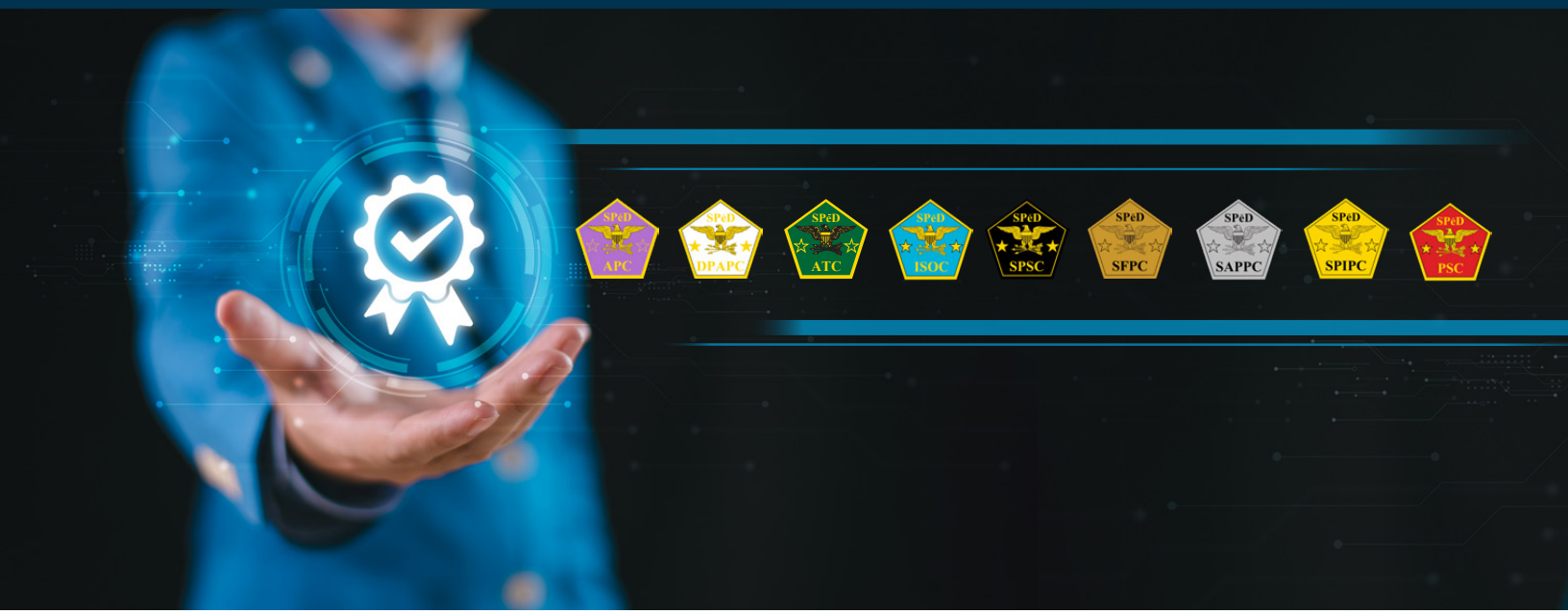

CDSE Pulse

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DCSA Leadership

David M. Cattler
Director, DCSA

Daniel J. Lecce
Deputy Director, DCSA

Kevin Jones
Assistant Director, Security Training

Erika Ragonese
Deputy Assistant Director, Security Training

CDSE Leadership

Audrey Gutierrez
Director

Glenn Stegall
Deputy Director

Pulse Staff

Cashmere He
Chief Content Officer

Isaiah Burwell
Content Writer

Jenise Kaliszewski
Tammi Bush
Content Contributors

Marc Pulliam
Content Designer

Center for Development of Security Excellence

CDSE – Center for Development of Security Excellence

@TheCDSE

Center for Development of Security Excellence

THIS MONTH'S FOCUS

SPēD Certifications: What Are They and Who Is Eligible?

By Isaiah Burwell

The Security Professional Education Development (SPēD) Certification Program is part of a DOD initiative to professionalize the security workforce. Established in DOD Instruction 3305.13 and DOD Manual 3305.13, this initiative ensures there exists a common set of competencies among security practitioners that promotes interoperability, facilitates professional development and training, and develops a workforce of certified security professionals. Certain criteria and prerequisites must be met to earn a certification.

In general, candidates eligible to pursue SPēD certifications include DOD personnel performing security enterprise functions, Federal employees of a participating agency within the security workforce, or contractors assigned to a security position supporting DOD. Eligible candidates must meet outlined prerequisites based on the specific certification or credential they are pursuing. There are nine SPēD certifications divided into three groups: Security Professionals, Antiterrorism, and Adjudicators.

The first category includes certifications intended for Security Professionals, beginning with the Security Fundamentals Professional Certification (SFPC). The SFPC indicates a security practitioner's understanding of foundational concepts, principles, and practices needed to successfully protect DOD assets. Candidates must obtain the SFPC before attempting to earn the Security Asset Protection Professional Certification (SAPPC), Special Program Security Credential (SPSC), or Security Program Integration Professional Certification (SPIPC). The SAPPC indicates a security practitioner's ability to apply foundational concepts, principles, and practices needed to successfully perform functions, implement programs, and pursue missions to protect DOD assets. The SPSC is for personnel who will be, or

are already, performing Security Officer functions for or on behalf of DOD Special Access Programs. The SPIPC indicates a security practitioner's understanding and ability to apply risk management and security program management concepts, principles, and practices.

Certifications in the Security Professionals group that do not require other certifications as prerequisites are the Physical Security Certification (PSC) and the Industrial Security Oversight Credential (ISOC). PSC is for DOD, industry, and Federal members performing physical security functions. ISOC is for DOD, industry, and Federal members under the National Industrial Security Program.

The Antiterrorism category only contains one credential, the Antiterrorism Credential (ATC). The ATC indicates a security practitioner's understanding and ability to contribute to a functioning Antiterrorism program. Only Antiterrorism Officers are eligible for the ATC.

The Adjudicator Professional Certification (APC) is required for all Personnel Security Adjudicators working for organizations accepted into the APC Program. Organizations include DCSA Adjudication and Vetting Services, Defense Intelligence Agency, National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, National Security Agency, and other Federal agencies. Personnel must obtain the APC before attempting the Due Process Adjudicator Professional Credential (DPAPC)which serves as proof an individual possesses the necessary skills to perform essential due process adjudicator tasks.

Most SPēD certifications require a prerequisite and provide the foundational knowledge needed to be successful in the course. Certifications are proof of the skill, intelligence, and competence of those who hold them. They are also a reflection of the quality of the institutions that bestow them. A SPēD certification is a signifier of excellence to organizations both in the Federal Government and industry.

DCSA Makes Changes to Security Certification Programs

By Cashmere He

The DCSA Security Training Directorate is initiating a comprehensive review of the SPēD Certification Program effective immediately.

A topic of concern for the SPēD program is the candidate management system (CMS), which recently migrated to a new platform to meet DOD cybersecurity requirements.

As part of this review, DCSA is pausing the requirement to track and report professional development units (PDUs) indefinitely. SPēD, APC, and CCITP certified professionals should no longer use the CMS to track professional development units (PDUs) or submit for certification renewal, until an alternative solution is identified.

Current SPēD, APC, and CCITP certifications remain valid, and CDSE will ensure this pause does not negatively impact current credentials.

Certification testing for these programs will continue as usual and personnel needing to obtain any of these certifications will still be able to do so.

All certificants will receive a new expiration date when the pause concludes. No certifications will expire or be lost during this pause.

This pause will allow the SPēD Program Management Office (PMO) to evaluate and improve the certification maintenance process.

If you have any questions, please contact the SPēD PMO at **dcsa.spedcert@mail.mil**.

EDUCATION & TRAINING

CDSE Education Division 8-week Courses

The Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency (DCSA) Center for Development of Security Excellence (CDSE) education program's more recent addition of shorter 8-week courses has become increasingly popular. The program's curriculum teaches students how to implement security strategies as well as how to leverage information and technology to address the Nation's security challenges and evolving security landscape.

CDSE established the education program, working with subject matter experts across DOD and the academic community. The American Council on Education (ACE) evaluates all education courses for credit recommendations, enabling students to transfer credit toward a bachelor's or master's degree at certain universities.

This fall, two 8-week tuition-free virtual instructor-led courses will be offered, starting August 18 through October 12: **Writing and Communication Skills in the Security Environment** (ED202.10) and **The Security Triangle: Security, Law Enforcement, and Intelligence** (ED402.10).

Secure your spot in these courses today! For more information and to register for these courses, visit **CDSE Education**.

PERSONNEL VETTING

Personnel Vetting Seminar

CDSE is presenting the "Virtual Instructor-led Personnel Vetting Seminar" on August 5 to 6. This seminar addresses the requirements associated with the reform of the Federal Government's personnel vetting system, known as Trusted Workforce (TW) 2.0. This course will aid personnel vetting practitioners in DOD, Federal agencies, and private industry to understand TW 2.0 requirements, identify gaps between current and future procedures, and support implementation. The seminar covers end-to-end personnel vetting operations, including the Federal Background Investigations Program, National Security Adjudications, and Continuous Vetting in a collaborative environment. The course consists of two half-days and targets U.S. Government security practitioners, military personnel, cleared industry Facility Security Officers, and other Federal personnel performing personnel vetting security-related duties and for personnel executing security programs for cleared industry. Visit the **course page** to register.

Overview of Federal Personnel Vetting e-Learning (PS185.16)

If you hold the APC or DPAPC, or perform or support National Security, Suitability, or HSPD-12 Credentialing adjudications, please check out "**Overview of Federal Personnel Vetting**" e-Learning. This course provides training which aligns with Trusted Workforce (TW) 2.0's transformational changes to the Security, Suitability, and Credentialing (SSC) enterprise. Registration is restricted to students with a .gov or .mil email address. Taking this course satisfies Gap Training Requirements for those who previously took PS001.18 and PS101.01 or PS101.10 prior to April 2025.

CSR and IR Management Resource

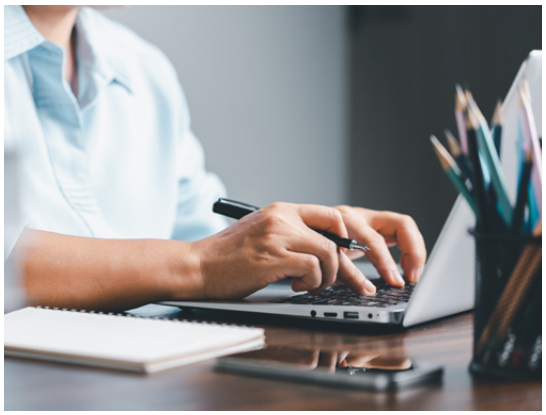
Check out the "**CSR and IR Management**" resource, which provides clarification and guidance on submission of Customer Service Requests (CSRs) and Incident Reports (IRs) to DCSA AVS. The materials are provided as part of a larger effort across the DOD to improve the personnel vetting mission. DCSA AVS has provided individual CSR and IR guidance on an occasional basis to customers. However, until now, the guidance has never been publicly available. The new materials will answer customer requests for specific information on CSR and IR submission and incorporate customer feedback. As a result, this will enable customers to submit timely, quality-improved CSR and IR information for adjudication.

Fundamentals of National Security Adjudications VILT PS101.10

Don't miss CDSE's Fundamentals of National Security Adjudications virtual instructor-led course July 22-30. This seven-day course will cover the fundamentals of the personnel security program, and the role of adjudicators along with investigative, counterintelligence, and law enforcement personnel in the personnel security program. Recommended attendees include DOD and federal civilians who adjudicate eligibility for assignments to sensitive positions. Certain prerequisites apply. Registration information can be found **here**.

INSIDER THREAT

Insider Threat for Industry Curriculum



The Insider Threat team has launched a new curriculum for industry titled "Insider Threat for Industry Curriculum (INT333.CU)." This curriculum provides training for insider threat program personnel working in cleared defense industries. It was developed to support students in meeting the requirements outlined in 32 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 117, National Industrial Security Program Operating Manual (NISPOM).

The INT333.CU curriculum description, learning objectives and courses can be found **here**.

INFORMATION SECURITY

Activity Security Manager (InfoSec) IF203.10

Check out CDSE's virtual instructor-led Activity Security Manager course. This 4-week mid-level course provides students with a comprehensive understanding of how to apply and implement specific DOD Information Security policies and procedures to mitigate and manage risks associated with developing, managing, and evaluating a DOD Information Security Program (ISP). It is tailored for DOD civilian, military, and contractor personnel with primary duties as an activity security manager, information security program specialist, or manager within a DOD Component ISP. The next offering is July 28 to August 24. Registration information can be found **here**.

PHYSICAL SECURITY

Enhance Your Security Expertise: New Intro to Physical Security Training (PY011.16) Launching Fall 2025

Coming this fall, enhance your security expertise with the "**Introduction to Physical Security (PY011.16)**" course. The course will provide the tools and knowledge you need to learn how to apply security in-depth principles and contribute to a stronger security posture. This eLearning course, geared to DOD civilians, military personnel, and defense contractors, covers physical security planning, implementation, and countermeasures to deter, delay, detect, and prevent attacks.

Physical Security and Asset Protection Course

Want to better protect DOD assets? "Physical Security and Asset Protection" (PY201.01) will give you the tools and knowledge you need. This instructor-led course will be held August 18 to 22 in Linthicum, MD and covers regulatory guidance, methodologies, and concepts for protecting DOD assets. Learn how to apply security-in-depth principles and contribute to a stronger security posture. Certain prerequisites apply. Visit the **course page** to learn more and register.

INDUSTRIAL SECURITY

Upcoming Getting Started Seminar for New Facility Security Officers (IS121.10)

The Getting Started Seminar for New Facility Security Officers (FSOs), IS121.10, will be held from August 5 to 8. This virtual instructor-led training course allows new FSOs and security personnel to learn and apply fundamental National Industrial Security Program (NISP) requirements in a collaborative environment. If you are an FSO, contractor security personnel, DOD Industrial Security Specialist, or anyone else working in the security environment, **register** today to attend this upcoming session.

SPECIAL ACCESS PROGRAMS

Introduction to Special Access Programs (SAP) Courses (SA101.01)

The Introduction to SAP course focuses on the Department of Defense (DOD) SAP fundamentals and is designed to prepare students to become SAP Security Professionals. The lessons address security enhancements across all security disciplines, compliance inspections and their requirements, annual reviews, and audits.

The course is administered through eLearning prerequisites and synchronous elements using the collaborative learning environment (CLE) STEPP. Class activities include group and individual practical exercises, quizzes, a team capstone, and a final course exam. The prerequisite eLearning courses/exams that provide a comprehensive introduction to SAP must be successfully completed prior to requesting enrollment into the instructor-led course. The course is offered on the following dates:

- August 5 - 8, 2025 (Lexington, Mass.) (MIT)
- September 9 - 12, 2025 (Rolling Meadows, Ill.) (NGC)

Fixed Facility Checklist Short

SAP released a new **Fixed Facility Checklist short**. The short focuses on the Fixed Facility Checklist (FFC) and how to fill out the necessary information with regards to the establishment and maintenance of a SAP Facility.

FY25 COURSES

Registration Now Open

Secure your spot now as classes fill quickly! Available courses are listed below.

Cybersecurity
Assessing Risk and Applying Security Controls to NISP Systems (CS301.01)
- September 22 - 26, 2025 (Linthicum, Md.)

Industrial Security
Getting Started Seminar for New Facility Security Officers (FSOs) VILT (IS121.10)
- August 5 - 8, 2025 (Virtual)

Information Security
Activity Security Manager VILT (IF203.10)
- July 28 - August 24, 2025 (Virtual)

Insider Threat
Insider Threat Detection Analysis VILT (INT200.10)
- August 18 - 22, 2025 (Virtual)
- September 22 - 26, 2025 (Virtual)

Personnel Security
Personnel Vetting Seminar VILT (PS200.10)
- August 5 - 6, 2025 (Virtual)

Physical Security
Physical Security and Asset Protection (PY201.01)
- August 18 - 22, 2025 (Linthicum, Md.)

Special Access Programs
Introduction to Special Access Programs (SA101.01)
- August 5 - 8, 2025 (Lexington, Mass.) (MIT)
- September 9 - 12, 2025 (Rolling Meadows, Ill.) (NGC)

Orientation to SAP Security Compliance Inspections (SA210.0)
- August 11 - 12, 2025 (Lexington, Mass.)

CDSE & DCSA NEWS

CDSE at the NCMS 61st Annual Training Seminar

Leaders from the Center for Development of Security Excellence (from left to right) Rojohn Soriano, Kristina Eddins, Stephanie Langlais, and Cashmere He, engaged with nearly 600 industry partners at the NCMS 61st Annual Training Seminar in Kissimmee, Florida on June 9 - 11. *(Note: Curtis Cook is a former CDSE member (pictured above, left).*

NCMS brings together professionals from across the security field to share best practices, explore emerging threats, and strengthen collaborations between government and industry.

CDSE representatives participated in discussions focused on current security training for the defense industrial base.

Security Training won 2nd place in the NCMS poster contest with a design from Creative Services (pictured below).

UPCOMING WEBINARS & CONFERENCES

Registration Open

Registration is open for the **DCSA Security Conference for DOD**. The three day virtual conference is geared to DOD security professionals, personnel security, acquisitions, insider threat, policy, investigators, adjudicators, human resources, counterintelligence, security compliance, senior leaders and federal agencies participating in the DCSA mission. The conference is only open to federal employees with .mil and .gov email addresses. Click **here** to register.

August 26 - 28, 2025

DITMAC/NITAM Conference

Registration is open for the National Insider Threat Awareness Month (NITAM) Conference hosted by the Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency (DCSA); led by the DOD Insider Threat Management and Analysis Center (DITMAC). Click **here** to register.

Thursday, August 18 - 19, 2025
8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. ET

Location: The United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) & Virtually

Indirect Assessment of Suicidality: A Novel Decision Support Tool

This webinar is intended for individuals with DOD/Government affiliations. As most insider threat programs typically utilize indirect/derived information, attendees will gain knowledge and use decision support tools in the context of multidisciplinary teams for assessing risk level of suicide. Click **here** to register.

Thursday, July 24, 2025 | 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. ET

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Meet Gwen Douglas, Industrial Security Specialist Instructor

By Tammi Bush

Gwen Douglas, a DCSA Industrial Security specialist instructor, has been with DCSA for 15 years and working in Security Training (ST) for 1 year. Working in the security field is nothing new for Douglas, who has over 20 years of experience in the discipline.

Douglas thoroughly enjoys instructing new Industrial Security Representatives (ISRs) and helping guide those who are sitting in the same seat she once did.

"I get to teach them their job because I used to do it. They get to ask questions, and we show them the importance of safeguarding classified information. I'm able to provide real life experiences and real examples to empower them and that's the best part," she said. "As instructors, we give them tips and best practices on how to address common things we see in the field. Hearing about their challenges and how we can help them has been rewarding as well."

Douglas explained there is always something to learn when working in the industrial security space with cleared industry. She added there is so much an ISR must know, including safeguarding, information systems, Foreign Ownership, Control, or Influence (FOCI), and critical thinking skills.

The practical experience of the training points out how to identify vulnerabilities and risk factors. Douglas acknowledged that DCSA and the Security Academy's role is becoming increasingly more important.

"New ISRs must be aware of their role and responsibilities to ensure industry is operating within the NISPOM guidelines and policies to ensure compliance. Our internal resources have to be updated and maintained to ensure alignment with national policy. The ISR's role is critical because they are the face of the agency. Training on communication skills is also important because it teaches new ISRs the importance of building rapport and positive partnerships with industry," said Douglas.

Douglas views teaching students and passing on her knowledge to the next generation of workers as the ultimate honor.

"As an instructor over the last year, it is different and exciting because I get to share my knowledge and skills with the students. It is so invigorating for me to build their confidence and support them," she said.

Douglas' dedication to the mission, coupled with her passion for the work, makes her an instrumental part of educating the workforce and shaping DCSA as the premier provider of integrated security services. Learn more about the IS training products **here**.

Reminder: URL Change

Security Training, Education, and Professionalization Portal (STEPP) and the Security Awareness Hub (SAH) have new URLs as of the end of June. The new URL for the STEPP platform is **https://securitytraining.dcsa.mil/** and the new SAH link is **https://securityawareness.dcsa.mil/**.

ABOUT DCSA

The Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency (DCSA) provides industrial security engagement and counterintelligence support to secure the trustworthiness of the U.S. government's workforce, contract support, technologies, services, and supply chains.

Our Role
We protect America's trusted workforce, trusted workspaces, and classified information. To do so, we have two fundamental missions: personnel security and industrial security. Supporting these two core missions are counterintelligence and insider threat and security training. For over 50 years, our agency has used each of these missions to meet the threats of our nation's adversaries.

How We Serve
DCSA is the largest investigative service provider in the federal government, supporting over 100 federal entities. We oversee 12,500 cleared facilities under the National Industrial Security Program (NISP). We rely on the following directorates to ensure the security of our nation's technologies and information.

Personnel Security
We deliver efficient and effective background investigations, continuous vetting, and adjudications. In doing so, we safeguard the integrity and trustworthiness of the federal and contractor workforce. We conduct background investigations for 95% of the federal government, including 105 departments and agencies. We also adjudicate 70% of the federal government's adjudicative determinations.

Industrial Security
At DCSA, we oversee 12,500 cleared facilities under the National Industrial Security Program (NISP). We make sure companies are protecting their facilities, personnel, and associated IT systems from attacks and vulnerabilities.

Counterintelligence and Insider Threat
Counterintelligence and insider threat supports both our personnel security and industrial security missions. Counterintelligence focuses on foreign insider threat while insider threat is focused on internal threat. In this mission center, we identify and stop attempts by our nation's adversaries to steal sensitive national security information and technologies.

Security Training
Our agency is comprised of nationally accredited training centers. These centers provide security training, education, and certifications for security professionals across the federal government and industry.

CDSE CONTACT LIST

Mailing/Postal Address
938 Elkridge Landing Road
Linthicum, Md 21090

STEPP (Learning Management System) Help Desk
Submit an online support request ticket or call the Help Desk at 202-753-0845 within the Washington, DC area or toll free at 833-200-0035 on weekdays from 8:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Eastern Time.

508 Compliance and Accessibility
cdseaccessibility@mail.mil

Certification Division/SPēD Project Management Office
dcsa.spedcert@mail.mil

Education Division
dcsa.cdseeducation@mail.mil

Outreach and Engagement Office
dcsa.ncr.cdse.mbx.cdse-communications@mail.mil

Training Division
dcsa.cdsetraining@mail.mil

Webinars
dcsa.cdsewebinars@mail.mil

Webmaster
dcsa.cdseweb@mail.mil

Still not sure whom to contact?
dcsa.ncr.dcsa-cdse.mbx.cdse-front-office@mail.mil