POSITION DESCRIPTION

**ASSISTANT secretary for Acquisition, Department of defense**

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| **OVERVIEW** | |
| Senate Committee | Armed Services |
| Agency Mission | The mission of the Department of Defense (DOD) is to provide the military forces needed to deter war and protect the security of our country. |
| Position Overview | The assistant secretary of defense for acquisition (ASD(A)) is the principal staff advisor to the undersecretary of defense for acquisition, technology and logistics (USD(AT&L)), and to the deputy secretary and secretary of defense on all matters relating to acquisition. The ASD(A) provides oversight and policy direction on the DOD acquisition system; major defense acquisitions programs; and space, intelligence, cyber and information system acquisitions issues. The ASD(A) also oversees two defense agencies: the Defense Acquisition University (DAU) and the Defense Contract Management Agency (DCMA). |
| Compensation | Level IV $155,500 (5 U.S.C. § 5313)[[1]](#endnote-1) |
| Position Reports to | Undersecretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics |
| **RESPONSIBILITIES** | |
| Management Scope | The ASD(A) is responsible for the department’s acquisition strategies and supporting plans, and provides management, supervision and oversight to:   * The DAU—which offers acquisition, technology and logistics training to military and federal civilian staff and federal contractors, as DOD’s corporate university * The DCMA—which performs contract administration services for the DOD, including foreign military sales * The deputy assistant secretary of defense for tactical warfare systems—who oversees the portfolio management, technical and programmatic evaluation, and functional oversight of DOD strategic and tactical programs * The deputy assistant secretary of defense for space, strategic and intelligence systems—who manages all space and intelligence acquisition oversight and related activities * The deputy assistant secretary of defense for command, control, communications, cyber and business systems—who leads the functional and acquisition oversight of all critical warfighting communications, command and control, and cyberspace capabilities * The director of performance assessment and root cause analyses, who governs the central office for major defense authorization performance assessment, root cause analysis and earned value management |
| Primary Responsibilities | * Provides oversight and policy direction to the secretary, deputy secretary and USD(AT&L) on matters relating to acquisition systems; major defense acquisitions programs; and space, intelligence, cyber, and information system acquisitions * Oversees the acquisition of DOD end-to-end space and intelligence infrastructure, as well as critical warfighting communications, command and control * Is responsible for major defense authorization performance assessment; root cause analysis; earned value management; and issues policies, procedures and guidance governing the conduct of such work by the military departments and the defense agencies. |
| Strategic Goals and Priorities | [Depends on the policy priorities of the administration.] |
| **REQUIREMENTS AND COMPETENCIES** | |
| Requirements | * Appointed from civilian life * Extensive experience in acquisition life cycle and contract management * Comprehensive understanding of complex military systems * Strong understanding of military affairs and strategy * Background or experience in federal budgeting, acquisition and workforce management |
| Competencies | * Strong interpersonal and communication skills * Ability to work under high pressure * Ability to integrate diverse missions and organizations * Ability to handle sensitive matters |
| **PAST APPOINTEES** | |
| James MacStravic (2016 to 2017) – Principal Assistant Secretary of Defense for Acquisition; Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Tactical Warfare Systems; Strategic Advisor, [Office of the Secretary of Defense](https://www.linkedin.com/company/828535?trk=prof-exp-company-name); [Deputy Director, Aerial Networking Systems Program Office](https://www.linkedin.com/title/deputy-director%2C-aerial-networking-systems-program-office?trk=mprofile_title), United States Air Force | |
| Katharina (Katrina) McFarland (2011 to 2016) – President of the DAU; Director for Acquisition for the Missile Defense Agency | |

# Endnotes

This position description was created with the help of MITRE Corporation, a not-for-profit company that provides innovative, practical solutions for some of the nation's most critical challenges in defense and intelligence, aviation, civil systems, homeland security, the judiciary, health care and cybersecurity.

1. The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017 (Public Law 115-31, May 5, 2017), contains a provision that continues the freeze on the payable pay rates for certain senior political officials at 2013 levels during calendar year 2017. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)