

July 30, 2003

AGAR ADVISORY

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF PROCUREMENT AND PROPERTY MANAGEMENT
PROCUREMENT POLICY DIVISION
AGAR ADVISORY NO. 56**

Purchase of Online Courseware Libraries and Learning Management System Services

INTRODUCTION: The purpose of this Agriculture Acquisition Regulation (AGAR) Advisory is to disseminate information issued, jointly, by the Department of Agriculture (USDA) Assistant Secretary for Administration (ASA) and the Chief Information Officer (CIO) regarding the purchase and delivery of online courseware libraries and learning management system (LMS) services.

SUMMARY: The joint ASA and CIO memorandum of June 26, 2003, establishes the USDA policy on acquisition of online courseware libraries and LMS services. Written approval from the USDA CIO and Director, Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) is required for purchase of online courseware libraries from sources other than GoLearn.gov.

SPECIFIC ISSUES:

- One of the purposes of the eTraining Initiative, an eGovernment initiative supporting the President's Management Agenda, is to provide government agencies with a consolidated source for online courseware and LMS services at reduced overall costs. GoLearn.gov, which currently has free online courses as well as online courseware libraries available for purchase, has been established as the Government's consolidated source for online courseware and supporting LMS services.
- Within USDA, the eGovernment training initiative is known as eLearning, and is managed jointly by the USDA OCIO and OHRM. The USDA eLearning efforts have been ongoing, and USDA-wide access to GoLearn.gov for LMS services and online courseware is anticipated to be available in the near future.
- USDA OHRM is USDA's exclusive ordering agent for online courseware libraries available from GoLearn.gov.
- The CIO and ASA have established specific approval requirements for purchase of online courseware or LMS services.
- Procurement offices have been advised to discontinue processing requests/actions for online courseware and LMS services unless the requirement is accompanied by written approval of the CIO and Director, OHRM.

- No online courseware or LMS services shall be procured unless specific approval from the USDA CIO and the Director, OHRM has been received.
- The attached copy of the ASA/CIO memorandum of June 26, 2003, provides the specifics of the policies for acquisition of these services and courseware.
- What are online courseware libraries and LMS services?

Online courseware libraries are commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) courseware that are available as catalogues of courses from vendors, no customization is required, and topics include general management courses as well as technical courses.

LMS services are information technology hardware, software and services that will be used to provide online training and/or to manage the functions of a training program, such as scheduling training, tracking student training records, issuance of training certificates, managing training facilities and planning career development.

- What is the process for requesting CIO and Director, OHRM acquisition approval?

For all online courseware library and LMS services requirements, regardless of dollar value, the request for CIO and Director, OHRM acquisition approval shall be submitted through the USDA CIO IT Acquisition Approval Process ([See AGAR Advisory No. 53.](#)).

- Questions regarding the applicability of the policy issued by the CIO and ASA to specific acquisitions should be addressed to:
 - Requiring agency Information Technology or Information Resources Management Offices;
 - Requiring agency Personnel or Training Offices;
 - USDA OHRM eLearning Coordinator, Jeffrey Shen at 202-720-0102 or by email to Jeffrey.Shen@usda.gov; or
 - The USDA eLearning Project Officer, Cynthia Bezz at 202-694-0004 or by email to Cynthia.Bezz@usda.gov.

- Departmental Regulation 5039-7, Delegation of Procurement Authority for Information Technology, dated September 18, 1998, paragraph 3, Background, subparagraph d states that:

“Proposed IT acquisitions and information resources activities must comply with all requirements established by the OCIO. OCIO oversight includes both approving IT investments and monitoring and evaluating the performance of these investments. Requirements include: (1) compliance with the Capital Planning and Investment Control Process; (2) compliance with standards of the USDA Information Systems Technology Architectures; (3) obtaining technical approvals in accordance with DR 3130-1; and (4) compliance with requirements of any prevailing OCIO moratoriums or USDA directives.”

The eLearning initiative, which is part of the USDA eGovernment effort, is under the cognizance of the Associate Chief Information Officer for eGovernment. As such, the requirements for approval of acquisition of online courseware and LMS services are considered to fall within the requirements of DR 5039-7.

If you have questions about this advisory, please contact Pat Honda by telephone at (202) 720-8924, by fax at (202) 720-8972, or by email to <mailto:pat.honda@usda.gov>. This advisory is available on the USDA homepage at <http://www.usda.gov/procurement/policy/advisories.html>.

EXPIRATION DATE: Effective until canceled.

[END]



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Department of
Agriculture

Office of the Chief
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TO: Agency Heads

FROM: *f* Lou Gallegos, *John Gallegos*
Assistant Secretary for Administration

for Scott Charbo
Chief Information Officer *Scott Charbo*

JUN 26 2003

JUN 24 2003

SUBJECT: USDA To Purchase Online Courseware Libraries from GoLearn.gov

In support of USDA's eLearning Initiative, key members of your training staffs recently completed an analysis of the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) requirements for learning management system (LMS) services. We appreciate your staffs' help with this effort.

The analysis identified a need to give USDA employees access to business, leadership and technical courses. Large selections of these courses are now available through the President's government-wide eTraining Initiative and its Web-based online learning center, GoLearn.gov. By using GoLearn.gov, USDA can acquire high quality online courseware libraries at significant savings. This memorandum transmits USDA's policy regarding the purchase and delivery of online courseware libraries and LMS services.

BACKGROUND

A key goal of the President's Management Agenda for expanding electronic government is to simplify and unify government-wide operations and leverage investments to eliminate unnecessary redundancy and duplication. The President's eTraining Initiative will provide all government agencies with a consolidated source for online courseware and LMS services at reduced overall costs. USDA also looks to the eTraining Initiative and specifically GoLearn.gov, as an important vehicle to offer training in support of our Human Capital Initiative.

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) is serving as the managing partner for the President's eTraining Initiative. OPM and the Department of Transportation established GoLearn.gov as the Government's consolidated source for online courseware and supporting LMS services. GoLearn.gov now has many free online courses as well as online courseware libraries available for purchase. Through this mechanism, USDA employees and their partners have access to thousands of courses that were purchased through government-wide contracts that offer significant economies of scale savings. In many cases, the courses are available at 25% savings when compared to the identical online courses purchased by USDA organizations last year. The Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) and the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) manage the USDA eLearning effort jointly.

Agencies and staff offices are reminded of the Deputy Secretary's August 6, 2002, moratorium on making investments that overlap or duplicate the President's or USDA's eGovernment Initiatives. This moratorium applies to purchasing services from any source until the USDA-wide eLearning Initiative is completed. This effort is in its final stages. Access to USDA-wide LMS services is anticipated in the near future.

Policy for Acquiring Online Courses

USDA has entered into an interagency agreement with GoLearn.gov to acquire the online courseware libraries they currently have available as well as additional courses that will be added to their inventory in the future. The agreement specifies that OHRM will serve as USDA's exclusive ordering agent for online courseware libraries available from GoLearn.gov. The following policies will apply to the purchase of online training and related services:

- Agencies and Departmental Staff Offices will establish a point of contact for their eLearning initiatives. This point of contact will be the liaison between OHRM and OCIO on all matters related to the procedures outlined in this memorandum. Only OHRM will work directly with GoLearn.gov. OHRM's eLearning coordinator is Jeffrey Shen at 202-720-0102 or Jeffrey.Shen@usda.gov.
- Requests for access to the courses are to be sent to OHRM. Purchases and billing will be done through a centralized mechanism. OHRM will supply detailed procedures to your Personnel Officers, Training Officers, and your points of contact. Departmental staff office purchases will be coordinated by OHRM.
- At this time, all agencies must use GoLearn.gov, unless courses in which you are interested are not offered through this site. Purchase of online courseware libraries from other sources may be made only with the written approval of the Director, OHRM and the Chief Information Officer (CIO). Such approval may be granted only in those instances where courses desired by agencies are not available through GoLearn.gov.
- Procurement offices should discontinue processing requests/actions for online courseware or LMS services unless the action is accompanied by written approval from the Director, OHRM and the CIO. Agency heads are responsible to ensure that this process is followed.

USDA's eLearning Project Manager in the OCIO is Cynthia Bezz at 202-690-0683 who can assist agencies and staff offices as we begin our partnership with GoLearn.gov. If you have questions on the overall eGovernment Initiative, please contact Chris Niedermayer, Associate Chief Information Officer for eGovernment at (202) 690-2118. We appreciate your support of this initiative and look forward to providing you quality products that meet your agencies' needs.

cc:

Deputy Administrators for Management
Mission Area Personnel Officers
Head of Contracting Activity Designees
Agency CIO's
USDA Training Officers