



MINISTRY of DEFENSE ADVISOR (MoDA) PROGRAM



Fostering Relationships, Building Capacity, Strengthening Partners

MoDA Program *Frequently Asked Questions*

How do I apply?

Applications can be submitted via email directly to dsca.ncr.bpc.list.moda@mail.mil and should include:

- Cover letter identifying desired posting and why you are a fit
- Narrative chronological resume
- Current SF-50 with social security number and birth date redacted
- Three reference letters, including the current supervisor and/or supervisors of prior deployments
- Command/Component approval to deploy, this is imperative to go through the selection process

What are the minimum criteria for prospective MoDA candidates?

- Current DoD Civilian in GS 13/14/15 grade or equivalent
- Must occupy permanent position status with home command/agency/department
 - A permanent DoD civilian position is defined by CFR 531.403 as a position filled by an employee whose appointment is not designated as temporary and does not have a definite time limitation of 1 year or less. Permanent positions include a position to which an employee is promoted on a temporary or term basis for at least 1 year and does not refer to positions filled by employees whose appointment is limited to 1 year or less.
 - Candidates **cannot** be in a Title 22 (FMS-funded) or Temp/Term billet. Your home agency should work to find a Title 10 funded position if you are to support the program.
 - OCONUS candidates cannot be on or entering the Priority Placement Program (PPP) while on assignment.
- Demonstrated Subject Matter Expertise in relevant areas
- Command Approval to accomplish a Temporary Change of Station for 12-30 months after training

What is considered relevant Subject Matter Expertise?

Key areas of Subject Matter Expertise include Program Management, Cyber, Maritime Domain Awareness, Logistics, Personnel Readiness, Strategy, Policy, Human Resource and Financial Management, among others.

Please still feel free to apply if your functional area is not listed above

Do I have to apply to specific MoDA openings?

Only one application is required. If applying for multiple MoDA positions, include separate cover letters for each position of interest and MoDA stakeholders will evaluate your candidacy for each role.

What does the MoDA selection process look like?

Recruiters will review application material and conduct intro calls. Candidates whose backgrounds fit current requirements will be interviewed by the MoDA Program Manager (PM).

The MoDA Program Management Office (PMO) will then conduct panel interviews for the most qualified candidates. Panels will consist of some combination of the following stakeholders: MoDA PM, the corresponding Office of Defense Cooperation (ODC/OSC), Chief and Combatant Commands (COCOMs), OSD Global Partnerships, and Institute for Security Governance (ISG) Regional Program Lead (RPL).

How do I complete Command Approval to participate in the MoDA Program?

Receive a Letter of Release from your parent organization/command. This must be an SES or O-6 level approval and must specify the approved length of assignment once in-country (12-30 months). The Recruiting team will provide you with a sample letter.

***Army, Navy, Air Force employees will also need component approval. Refer to the specific Position Description for those points of contact.*

How competitive is the MoDA selection process?

It varies, but there are usually at least 2-3 most qualified candidates in final consideration for each MoDA position.

It varies, but each MoDA position usually has 2-3 highly qualified candidates for final consideration.

Are there different types of assignments?

Most assignments are through detailing participants to DSCU for the duration of training and in-country assignments in Temporary Change of Station (TCS) status; however, DSCA fills a limited number of Temporary Duty (TDY) deployments and very few DSCA Term Hire positions.

How long are the detail assignments?

TCS assignments are generally 12-30 months in-country based on position requirements. Iraq is a one-year TDY deployment.

Is housing furnished during in-country assignments?

Yes. Furnished housing for TCS missions is provided through the embassy.

TDY mission housing at NATO Mission Iraq (NMI) is more like barracks or Containerized Housing Unit (CHU) living with a bathroom.

What options are available for the relocation and/or storage of Household Goods (HHGs)?

MoDA PMO authorizes shipment of HHGs or HHG can be placed in temporary storage. Shipping your HHGs is taxable. Information related to assignment/deployment taxable events can be found on the DFAS website. The DFAS website can be found here: <https://www.dfas.mil/CivilianEmployees/Civilian-Permanent-Change-of-Station-PCS/Civilian-PCS-Entitlement-Guide/Relocation-Income-Tax-Allowance-RITA/>. Taxes can be reimbursed pending completion of Relocation Income Tax Allowance (RITA) paperwork. The program does authorize shipment of one vehicle depending on country. MoDA PMO does not pay to store vehicles. MoDA PMO does pay for Non-Temporary Storage. However, MoDA PMO does NOT pay for property management services.

Do I have to pay rent or utilities while in-country?

There is no charge for rent or utilities while in country; however, Advisors are responsible for cable, internet, and landline telephone connections. The MoDA program pays the Department of State (DoS) to provide a cell phone and required cellular service. We also fund a DoS laptop and printer/scanner. We do not reimburse for personal laptops. We highly recommend you bring a CAC reader on your assignment.

Are in-country MoDA assignments accompanied?

For most TCS posts, the MoDA can be accompanied. The MoDA PMO team works alongside the DoS and the respective Embassy to identify and pay for your child's education at a DoD school or DoDEA accredited school. This will vary by country.

***While pets are also authorized, MoDA follows the JTR WRT reimburse for costs associated with pets.*

Do spouses typically work while accompanying the MoDA in-country?

*Many spouses have continued working in either remote or in-person capacities; however, this assignment does **not** qualify spouses for the DoS Essential Family Members program unless they are already DoS employees. Over the years, several spouses have found employment within the embassy community. MoDA PMO does not assist in this area.*

Does funding exist if I need to go TDY?

Yes, if you receive approval in advance and are travelling with your foreign counterpart. You'll receive a spreadsheet to complete. The travel request must be e-mailed to our travel coordination box and PMO approval is required.

Does DSCA pay my salary?

No, your parent organization continues to pay your salary. Your parent organization will be reimbursed your Basic Pay from Block 12A/20A on your SF-50. This is outlined in the General Terms and Conditions (GT&C) FS-7600. We will work with your organization to complete a GT&C FS-7600A or FS-7600B.

How is my pay revised once I reach my in-country assignment?

Please review DoS Office of Allowance page: https://aoprals.state.gov/Web920/location.asp?menu_id=95 Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) and Post Differential information can be found on the DoS Allowance by Location pages.

Will I continue to accrue home leave?

Yes. Please work with your parent organization to process.

Am I authorized Funded Environmental Morale Leave (FEML)?

Yes, provided you are there long enough to earn FEML. Advisors on TCS orders must serve a minimum of 24-months at an OCONUS duty station to be eligible for Funded Environmental and Morale Leave (FEML).

Can I be promoted because of this TCS assignment or deployment?

No.

How does my annual evaluation work during my OCONUS detail assignment?

As you will continue to encumber the FTE billet at your parent organization, your existing rater will continue to serve in that capacity throughout your MoDA assignment. It is incumbent on all MoDAs to ensure their raters have enough information to adequately perform this duty. The ODC/OSC should have input into to your performance review.

Do I need a Government Travel Charge Card (GTCC)?

Yes, but the MoDA PMO no longer manages GTCCs for participants. You should have your GTCC placed into a mission critical status while on your assignment.

In the case of evacuation, where do I return?

According to DoS and DoD guidance, current MoDAs will return to the National Capital Region (NCR) or a designated safe haven within the US. If the U.S. Embassy in country declares an Ordered or Authorized Departure, due to local conditions, the Program Office will coordinate your orders and travel documentation. DoD civilian employees and their EFMs will be processed for allowances in accordance with the JTR, Chapter 6, paragraph 0604.

What does the training consist of?

MoDA training is a 7-week program:

Strategic Advisor Course (SAC): SAC is a three-week course located at the Muscatatuck Urban Training Center in Indiana and is conducted by DSCU. Students will train comprehensive skill development in advisory functions and partner capacity building, which include adult to adult education models, mentoring, and multiple methods of engagement. Students will also undergo Foreign Affairs Counter Threat (FACT) instruction as part of the SAC.

Country & Mission Seminar (CMS):

CMS is a four-week course: the first three weeks are conducted virtually from your HOR and the last week is in-person at DSCU NCR. You will receive the schedule for the course one week prior to the start of the course.

ALSO:

SAC training occurs over 18 days culminating with a fully immersive capstone final exercise. Operational tempo (OPTEMPO) during the entire period is arduous and sustained. You will train seven days a week but do have one personal half day in the schedule where you will have a few hours of “free time” while still restricted to the training site. And although actual scheduled training activities occupy about 8.5 hours on the schedule, there are other study or research requirements that will eat into your off-time.

Does the SAC training schedule incur overtime consideration?

No. The SAC qualifies as training in accordance with the following statute:

****Title 5 United States Code (U.S.C.), Section 4109 prohibits payment of overtime pay (to include compensatory time) to civilian employees for time spent in training.**

****OSD General Counsel has denied all requests for exception to this statute. Further, ALL fully reimbursable (Working Capital Funded) employees who have successfully lobbied their parent organizations for overtime pay WRT MoDA training have been contacted by DFAS for reimbursement of those (over) payments.**

****Additional training details will be addressed by the training team after selection**

Are the DSCU courses accredited?

Yes. DSCU courses are accredited through the Council on Occupational Education and each course's accreditation can be viewed on each course homepage, which can be found in the course catalog of the DSCU website here: <https://www.dscu.edu/about#acc>