



The Defense Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS) is a tool that provides commanders and Department of Defense (DoD) leaders with important feedback about the current climate within their unit or organization. This document contains a list of frequently asked questions about the DEOCS, and is intended to provide survey administrators, commanders, leaders, and supervisors with a high-level overview of the DEOCS.¹

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¹ For more information about the roles different personnel take in the DEOCS, navigate to <https://www.defenseculture.mil/Assessment-to-Solutions/A2S-Home/> and under step 1, Prepare, click on the document titled “User Roles and the DEOCS Process.”

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General

What is the DEOCS?

The DEOCS is a survey conducted by the Department of Defense (DoD) Office of People Analytics (OPA) to provide commanders and leaders with information they can use to improve their unit or organizational climate. The DEOCS asks questions about an individual's experiences within their unit, organization, Military Service Academy (MSA), or MSA preparatory school. The survey also asks questions about an individual's immediate supervisor, unit commander, organizational leader, Senior Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO)/Senior Enlisted Leader (SEL), the first cadet or midshipman in their chain of command (MSAs), or the first cadet or midshipman candidate in their chain of command (MSA preparatory schools). The combined responses to these questions provide commanders and other leaders with important feedback about the current climate and help to identify emerging or existing challenges that may negatively impact their unit.

Is my unit or organization eligible to request a DEOCS?

The DEOCS is available to all Department of Defense (DoD) agencies, however, a unit or organization must have at least 16 individuals, excluding the commander or leader, to request a survey. If a unit or organization has fewer than 16 individuals, the commander or leader is encouraged to instead conduct focus groups to assess their unit or organizational climate. Contact your local Equal Opportunity Advisor (EOA), Command Climate Specialist (CCS), or Equal Opportunity (EO) Service Headquarters to ensure you are complying with your Service's command climate assessment policy.

How do participants access the DEOCS? Do they have to complete the survey in one sitting?

All DEOCS must be completed online using a computer or mobile device (such as a smartphone or tablet). Paper surveys are no longer an option. Once a registration has been approved, the DEOCS system will provide survey administrators with a survey link and subgroup-specific passcodes. Survey administrators should distribute this information to the appropriate unit or organization members once the survey has opened. Participants will be prompted to enter the passcode before beginning the DEOCS.

Can contractors or foreign nationals take the DEOCS?

No. Contractors with the federal government and foreign nationals employed by the DoD are considered members of the public for data collection purposes and are therefore ineligible to take the DEOCS.

How does the DEOCS protect participants' privacy?

The DEOCS team is committed to safeguarding the information of all participants. The DEOCS system has privacy policies and secure technology in place to protect all personally identifiable information.

All participant answers are protected and kept confidential. No one—including survey administrators, commanders and leaders, and their supervisors—is able to view who has or has not completed a survey nor are they able to access a specific individual's survey responses. With the exception of open-ended (i.e., short answer) responses all data are reported in the aggregate. To further ensure participants' privacy, results for subgroups or demographic categories with fewer than five participants are not reported. For example, if only two women in a unit complete the DEOCS, women-only results will not be provided to the unit's leaders, only overall results for men and women combined.

Short answer responses are compiled and provided as part of the results reporting; however, these responses are never linked to specific individuals and participants are repeatedly urged to make sure they do not unintentionally identify themselves in their responses. Additional measures that we encourage participants take to protect their own privacy include being aware of the environment in which they take the survey and not leaving the survey unattended.

Moreover, OPA's data security systems have been designed with overlapping layers of security to protect participants' information from cyber-attacks. Response data and personally identifiable information (PII) are encrypted during data collection and stored in a secure network isolated by firewalls and other security measures; PII is never stored in the same file as DEOCS responses. OPA actively monitors all digital traffic and inspects its systems to ensure participants' information stays secure. All systems comply with the National Institute of Standards and Technology's (NIST) Risk Management Framework (RMF) security standards, as required by the DoD.

Finally, OPA has also received a federal Certificate of Confidentiality from the National Institute of Health (NIH), which further protects the privacy of participants by prohibiting the disclosure of personally identifiable information and providing additional protection against any attempt to subpoena confidential survey records.

Registering and Administering the DEOCS

Who can register/set up a new DEOCS?

The DEOCS is available to all Department of Defense (DoD) agencies and is registered by a survey administrator on behalf of a unit or organization's commander or leader. A survey administrator is typically a trained military EO professional, however, commanders and leaders can authorize any responsible member of their organization to serve in this role.

What is a survey administrator?

The survey administrator is the individual who oversees the entire command climate assessment process. This includes registering a DEOCS, adding a customized set of questions if desired, coordinating outreach to participants (i.e., invitation and reminder emails), and tracking response rates. This individual also receives the DEOCS results and is typically involved with their review and interpretation and the development of a corresponding, tailored action plan. A survey administrator is typically a trained military EO professional, however, commanders and leaders can authorize any responsible member of their organization to serve in this role.

Can there be more than one survey administrator for a unit or organization?

Yes. Survey administrators may share DEOCS registrations. If the survey administrator is not available during the DEOCS process, they can also designate a proxy administrator. For more information about sharing a DEOCS registration or designating a proxy survey administrator, please navigate here <https://www.defenseculture.mil/Assessment-to-Solutions/A2S-Home/> and under step 1, Prepare, click on the document titled “User Roles and the DEOCS Process.”

How do survey administrators register a survey?

To register a survey, survey administrators must go to the DEOCS Portal website located at: <https://www.drcedirect.com/all/eca-portal-v2-ui/#/login/deocs>.

What is the DEOCS Portal?

The DEOCS Portal is a comprehensive website where commanders and leaders, their supervisors, and survey administrators can register a DEOCS (survey administrators), approve or deny a new DEOCS (commanders and leaders), monitor response rates (all), and view and download DEOCS results (all). The DEOCS Portal is comprised of two major components—the Registration Portal and the Interactive Dashboard. More information about the DEOCS Portal, including how to request an account, can be found by navigating to <https://www.defenseculture.mil/Assessment-to-Solutions/A2S-Home/> and under step 1, Prepare, selecting the document titled “How to Request a DEOCS Portal Account.”

Does the commander or leader receive a notification when a survey is registered?

Yes. When registering a survey, the survey administrator is required to enter the commander’s or leader’s name and e-mail. Once the administrator has submitted the DEOCS request, the commander receives an e-mail and must approve or deny the DEOCS request. Once approved, the DEOCS will begin on the specified start date.

Is a commander or leader's approval necessary to administer a DEOCS?

Yes. The commander or leader of the unit or organization requesting the DEOCS must approve the survey submitted by the survey administrator. In the DEOCS Portal, the survey administrator will be asked to enter the commander or leader's name and e-mail address. The commander or leader will then receive an email asking him or her to log in to the DEOCS Portal and approve or deny the DEOCS request. Once the commander or leader has done this, the survey administrator will be notified and—if approved—the DEOCS will begin on the specified start date.

Why does the commander or leader have to approve the DEOCS I registered?

Because the DEOCS is an assessment of a commander's or leader's unit or organizational climate, it is necessary for the survey administrator to acknowledge that they have (1) obtained consent from the commander/leader to request a DEOCS and (2) obtained consent from the commander/leader to receive the DEOCS report. In the DEOCS Registration Portal, the survey administrator will enter the commander/leader's name and e-mail, and an e-mail will be sent to the commander/leader asking them to approve or deny the DEOCS request. The commander/leader can either approve the DEOCS request in the email they receive or log in to the DEOCS Portal and approve or deny the request. Once the commander/leader has approved the request, the survey administrator will be notified and the DEOCS will begin on the specified start date.

How long should the DEOCS be made available to my unit or organization's members?

To help ensure that all members of a unit or organization have ample opportunity to complete the DEOC, we recommend that the survey be made available for at least 20 business days (i.e., four work weeks). However, the survey administrator should closely monitor survey response rates and keep leadership informed so that, should response rates trend lower than desired, the survey end date can be extended (through DEOCS Registration Portal) if appropriate. Response rates can be monitored through the DEOCS Portal Interactive Dashboard.

How many participants need to complete the DEOCS for the results to be meaningful?

OPA does not recommend a specific number of responses for your unit or organization. However, the higher the completion rate, the greater confidence you can have in your unit or organization's results.

Content of the DEOCS

What types of questions does the DEOCS ask?

The DEOCS contains over 100 questions that measure 10 protective factors and 9 risk factors to help unit and organization commanders and leaders, as well as DoD leadership, better understand the current climate within and, in the case of DoD leadership, across units and organizations. These factors are:

Protective Factors

- *Cohesion*
- *Connectedness*
- *Engagement & Commitment*
- *Fairness*
- *Inclusion*
- *Leadership Support*
- *Morale*
- *Safe Storage for Lethal Means*
- *Transformational Leadership*
- *Work-Life Balance*

Risk Factors

- *Alcohol Impairing Memory*
- *Binge Drinking*
- *Passive Leadership*
- *Racially Harassing Behaviors*
- *Sexist Behaviors*
- *Sexually Harassing Behaviors*
- *Stress*
- *Toxic Leadership*
- *Workplace Hostility*

These 19 protective and risk factors are assessed because they are related to the DEOCS' six strategic target outcomes (STOs)—personnel issues identified as strategically important to the Department of Defense (DoD). For more information about each of these factors and how they relate to the STOs, navigate to <https://www.defenseculture.mil/Assessment-to-Solutions/Factor-Products/>.

In addition to questions assessing the protective and risk factors, the DEOCS contains a subset of questions that are asked only of Military Service Academy (MSA) and MSA Preparatory School participants and focus on Academy life.

Finally, survey administrators also have the option to customize their survey in two ways—by selecting up to ten multiple choice questions (also known as locally developed questions, or LDQs) and up to five short-answer questions (SAQs)—from a custom question bank.

Can I write my own questions for an upcoming DEOCS?

No. Per DoD policy (DoDI 8910.01, "Information Collection and Reporting") the questions on the DEOCS must undergo human subjects review and Report Control Symbol (RCS) review and approval process. This means that all survey questions must be reviewed and approved before the survey is sent to potential participants. Prior versions of the DEOCS were granted an exception but DEOCS 5.0 is fully compliant with this policy.

However, OPA does have a process for stakeholders to recommend questions for inclusion in the custom question bank². Questions that are submitted are reviewed through human subjects review and the Report Control Symbol (RCS) process and, if approved, will be added for use in future DEOCS administrations.

NEW! Due to recent changes regarding DoD survey guidance, we can no longer update this question bank on a quarterly basis. All DEOCS content was deemed to be "public interest," therefore, any additions or changes to content must be approved by the Office of Management & Budget (OMB). OPA plans to initiate the OMB review in Fall 2022. Any submissions we receive will be considered for additions at that time, dependent on the outcome of the OMB review.

When registering a survey, survey administrators can customize the survey by selecting up to ten multiple choice questions (also known as locally developed questions, or LDQs) and up to five short-answer questions (SAQs) from this custom question bank.

Do commanders and leaders have a say in what questions are asked on the DEOCS?

In a way, yes. In addition to the core questions that are asked of all participants, survey administrators can select up to ten multiple choice questions (also known as locally developed questions, or LDQs) and up to five short answer questions (SAQs) from a custom question bank when registering their survey.³

Can I add custom questions to my DEOCS (i.e., include SAQ's and LDQ's)?

Yes. In addition to the core questions that are asked of all participants, survey administrators can select up to ten multiple choice questions (also known as locally developed questions, or LDQs) and up to five short answer questions (SAQs) from a custom question bank when registering their survey.⁴

² For more information on how to submit questions or topics for consideration in the custom question bank, please navigate to <https://www.defenseculture.mil/Assessment-to-Solutions/A2S-Home/> and under step 1, Prepare, click on the document titled "Process for Updating Custom Question Bank."

³ The questions in the custom question bank are provided in the DEOCS Portal and also posted on <https://www.defenseculture.mil/Assessment-to-Solutions/A2S-Home/> (see "Custom Question Bank" under step 1, Prepare).

⁴ The questions in the custom question bank are provided in the DEOCS Portal and also posted on <https://www.defenseculture.mil/Assessment-to-Solutions/A2S-Home/> (see "Custom Question Bank" under step 1, Prepare).

DEOCS Reporting

How quickly will my DEOCS results be available?

Reports are typically available within 72 hours of the survey end date.

How do I view/access my DEOCS report?

The survey administrator, the requesting commander or leader, and their supervisor will receive an e-mail notification when results are available to view in the DEOCS Interactive Dashboard.⁵ Each of these users can also download their results as a PDF.

Who can view/has access to the survey results in the DEOCS Portal?

Survey administrators, requesting commanders and leaders, and their supervisors can all access survey results through the DEOCS Portal.

What does a DEOCS 5.0 report look like?

Survey results are presented in the DEOCS Portal Interactive Dashboard. Graphs and tables are used to display results and users can download all or a portion of the results as a PDF. Factors are organized into two main groups: 1) protective factors and 2) risk factors, with both favorable and unfavorable results for all factors. An “alert” feature calls attention to factors of concern for your unit or organization. Factor results are also displayed by demographic category and tables that show results for each question on the survey are provided.⁶

Does the DEOCS Portal Interactive Dashboard break down results by different subgroups?

Yes. The DEOCS Portal Interactive Dashboard breaks down survey results for certain demographic categories such as gender and enlisted/officer status, respectively. In addition, if subgroups were identified and the necessary information included in the roster when the survey administrator registered the survey, a breakdown of results by those subgroups will also be provided.⁷

The presentation of results for different subgroups enables commanders, leaders, and their supervisors to better understand the nuances of their unit or organization’s climate, and identify any noteworthy disparities in their members’ beliefs, attitudes, or

⁵ For instructions on use of the Interactive Dashboard, navigate to <https://www.defenseculture.mil/Assessment-to-Solutions/A2S-Home/> and under step 2, Conduct, click the link titled “How to Use the Interactive Dashboard.”

⁶ For instructions on use of the Interactive Dashboard, navigate to <https://www.defenseculture.mil/Assessment-to-Solutions/A2S-Home/> and under step 2, Conduct, click the link titled “How to Use the Interactive Dashboard.”

⁷ Sample surveys are provided on the Assessment to Solutions website, under step 1, Prepare: <https://www.defenseculture.mil/Assessment-to-Solutions/A2S-Home/>.

experiences. To protect participants' privacy and confidentiality, however, a subgroup must have least five survey respondents for results to be displayed. If, for example, only four females in a unit respond to the survey, results will not be shown by gender.

Are “like-unit,” “like-organization” or “Service” comparisons included in the DEOCS Portal Interactive Dashboard?

No. The DEOCS Portal Interactive Dashboard currently does not provide comparisons of a unit or organization's survey results to its overall Service or to “like-units” or like-organizations.” These comparisons may be available in future iterations of the dashboard.

Are trends available in the DEOCS Portal Interactive Dashboard?

Yes. The DEOCS Portal Interactive Dashboard does displays trends over time for factor ratings if there are previous DEOCS 5.0 survey results with the same Service component, the same unit identification code (UIC), and the same commander/leader. Additional trending capabilities—such as, viewing results for the same unit or organization over time under different commanders/leaders—will be built into future iterations of the dashboard, in consultation with stakeholders.

Can I access a previous DEOCS report for my unit/organization?

In most cases, yes.

If a DEOCS was **conducted after July 28, 2020**, a PDF report can be downloaded by survey administrators, commanders and leaders, and their supervisors through the current DEOCS Portal. To do this, log in to the DEOCS Portal and navigate to the Interactive Dashboard by clicking on “My Applications” and then “Interactive Dashboard.” Next, click on the “DEOCS v4.1 Downloads” tab and use the “Service,” “Unit/Organization Title,” “Survey Date,” “Group,” and “Report Type” filters to identify the survey report you would like to download. Only Survey Results reports and Comment reports for DEOCS 4.1 administrations are available; Executive Reports are not.

If a DEOCS was **conducted prior to August of 2020**, you can e-mail a request to ContactOPA@mail.mil that includes the unit or organization's title, UIC, DEOCS ID/registration number, and the survey dates. Note, however, that reports are only retained for a maximum of two years after the close date.

Using the Results of the DEOCS

What should I do when I get the final DEOCS report?

We urge transparency and recommend that DEOCS results be shared with all members of a unit or organization. Moreover, the DEOCS is intended to produce actionable results that can be used to effect positive change. There are many resources available at <https://www.defenseculture.mil/Assessment-to-Solutions/A2S-Home/> to assist commanders and leaders in improving their unit or organization's climate.

For instructions on use of the Interactive Dashboard, navigate to <https://www.defenseculture.mil/Assessment-to-Solutions/A2S-Home/> and under step 2, Conduct, click the link titled "How to Use the Interactive Dashboard."

DEOCS Help

Who should survey administrators contact if they have questions about how to register and administer a DEOCS?

Equal Opportunity Advisors (EOA) or others in the field with questions about how to register, administer, and use the DEOCS Portal should contact the DEOCS help desk at:

- 1-833-867-5674
- deocs@datarecognitioncorp.com

Some of my participants can't access the DEOCS Portal and/or the survey. What should I tell them?

Due to certain configuration settings, unit and organization members who attempt to take the DEOCS on a DoD computer may have problems accessing it. In such cases, suggest that the participant take the DEOCS on a mobile device or on a non-DoD computer.