



CALL FOR PAPERS & PANELS: DUE NOVEMBER 18, 2025

Submit Paper and Panel Proposals at www.researchsymposium.com

The Naval Postgraduate School is pleased to announce the Call for Papers for the Accelerating Warfighting Capabilities, 23rd Annual Acquisition Research Symposium and Innovation Summit to be held on May 6-7, 2026 in Monterey, California.

This year's prestigious event has the overreaching theme of "Accelerating Warfighting Capabilities" and is sponsored by the Acquisition Research Program, Naval Postgraduate School and the Naval Postgraduate School Foundation.

The Research Symposium & Innovation Summit serves as a catalyst for meaningful progress and informed change in the field of defense acquisition. The event brings together academic researchers, acquisition professionals, and defense service leaders for two days of exploration, discovery, and dialogue intended to inform acquisition policy and modernization efforts.

In keeping with recent executive orders and DOD memoranda, the goal of this dual event is to explore and promote innovative ways to enhance readiness, deter adversaries, and increase warfighting capabilities by reviving our defense industrial base, reforming our acquisition process, and rapidly fielding emerging technologies.

We welcome papers and panels proposals that address these areas of concern, as well as the themes below and any other topics related to accelerating warfighting capabilities in procurement, acquisition, requirements, research and development, program management, acquisition workforce, and technology transition.

The Innovation Summit will take place on Thursday afternoon, featuring panels designed to showcase current and future innovation efforts across the defense innovation ecosystem that accelerate warfighting capabilities. These panels will be composed of a curated selection of symposium research proposals and stakeholders from across academia, industry and government, bringing together diverse perspectives and areas of expertise.

RESEARCH THEMES & TOPICS TO CONSIDER

We welcome submissions of papers and panels on any topic related to the theme of "Accelerating Warfighting Capabilities," including (but not limited to) any of the topics below.

Acquisition Processes and Reforms

- De-risking and Re-risking Acquisition Processes: Analyzing the key considerations for evaluating, managing, and balancing risk in the acquisition processes to ensure timely delivery of relevant operational capabilities to the warfighters.
- Implementing Regulatory Reforms: Reviewing the opportunities, risks, benefits, and challenges of current and future reforms to DOD's acquisition regulations and how they can be effectively applied.
- Modernizing Acquisition Processes: Examining how the DOD can modernize its acquisition processes to promote speed, flexibility, and execution while maintaining accountability and transparency.
- Optimizing the Adaptive Acquisition Framework: Investigating the role of the Adaptive Acquisition Framework in promoting streamlined acquisition and how it can be further optimized to meet the needs of the DOD.
- Rethinking Requirements: Exploring strategies and initiatives to improve the development and communication of requirements by both the Joint Forces, individual services and PEOs, including efforts to expedite outcomes, strengthen force design, enhance industry engagement, and enable experimentation-led approaches.
- Supporting and Maintaining New Energy Projects: Amending current acquisition and contracting practices to ensure new energy projects are supported and maintained effectively over their entire operating life.

Acquisition Workforce

- Restructuring Performance Evaluation Metrics: Rethinking performance evaluation metrics for the acquisition workforce, with an eye to incentivizing behaviors that will enhance operational impact and improve the overall effectiveness of defense procurement.
- Working Across Different Roles in the Acquisition Community: Exploring options for eradicating silos and fostering increased collaboration across different roles in the acquisition community, such as between contracting officers, program managers, senior leaders, engineers, and others.

Commercial Solutions and Contracting

- Leveraging Commercial Solutions and Other Transactions Authority: Examining how the DOD can leverage commercial solutions and Other Transactions Authority to expedite acquisitions and enhance operational capabilities.
- Optimizing the Request for Proposal (RFP) Process for Mission-Oriented Contracts: Ensuring that awarded contracts are mission-oriented and outcomes-driven to drive competition and innovation opportunities, maximize utility to the end-user, and mitigate risk to the DOD.
- Utilizing Existing Authorities and Contracting Vehicles: Exploring strategies to ensure the acquisition workforce consistently and effectively uses the authorities and flexible contracting vehicles already available to them.

Emerging Technologies

- Acquiring Emerging Technologies: Enabling acquisition professionals, policymakers, and end users with the knowledge, insight, and best practices necessary to autonomous systems, artificial intelligence, machine learning, integrated sensors, hypersonics, additive manufacturing, directed energy, cybersecurity, and other emerging technologies.
- Revolutionizing Warfighter Capability with Emerging Technologies: Exploring the most relevant technologies with the potential to enhance warfighting capabilities in future military operating environments.
- Designing for Resilience and Relevance: Investigating how to effectively incorporate emerging technologies and best practices such as interoperability, Modular Open Systems Approach (MOSA), artificial intelligence (AI), autonomous systems, and cybersecurity into acquisition and technology development pathways, so as to deliver secure, relevant capabilities that can be easily upgraded or adapted for future threats.
- Diversifying Energy Technology Acquisitions for Resilience: Improving resilience against economic interdiction by potential adversaries through diversified energy technology acquisitions.

Industrial Base and Supply Chain

- Ensuring a Resilient Supply Chain: Examining strategies, investments, technologies, and partnerships to ensure the resilience, transparency, and security of the defense supply chain and the availability of key weapons systems components, such as rare earth minerals, microchips, and energy sources.
- Small Business Participation in Acquisition: Exploring ways to recruit, integrate, and support small business participation in the defense industrial base, as well as how to mitigate common barriers and challenges.
- Commercial Integration: Leveraging private sector innovation and capacity. Aligning industry and DOD priorities and incentives. Partnering effectively with industry throughout the development, testing, production, and sustainment of weapons systems.
- Strengthening the Industrial Base: Investigating policies and practices to ensure the health, profitability, and diversity of the US industrial base.
- Ensuring Energy Resource Availability for Warfighters: Developing strategies to assure the availability of energy resources in a world of complex and interdependent supply chains, distribution systems, ownership models, and contested logistics.
- International Collaboration: Exploring ways to improve Foreign Military Sales (FMS) and Direct Commercial Sales (DCS) to streamline and speed capability acquisition for allies and partners, while protecting US interests and expanding support for the US defense industrial base.

Innovation and Risk-Taking

- Incentivizing Innovation and Risk-Taking: Exploring how the DOD can incentivize and reward risk-taking and innovation within its acquisition workforce to foster a culture of creativity and adaptability.
- Scaling Innovation Efforts Across the DOD: Exploring pathways for scaling innovation efforts across the DOD while preserving the efficiency and creativity of small teams.
- Building on Innovation Momentum for Large-Scale Results: How to build on the momentum of current innovation efforts to achieve more large-scale results.

Logistics and Sustainment

- Contested Logistics: Investigating methods and technologies to ensure resilient logistics operations in denied environments.

- Lifecycle Logistics Management: Examining strategies, best practices, and new methods for logistical support and sustainment throughout a system's lifecycle.
- Last-Mile Logistics: Evaluating emerging technologies and methods for tactical edge distribution, including autonomous delivery systems and forward operating base supply management.
- Modernization: Investigating the integration of advanced manufacturing capabilities, artificial intelligence, and digital solutions to improve and enhance logistics and sustainment.

Program Management

- Cost, Schedule, and Performance Tradeoffs: Exploring strategies for balancing cost, schedule, and performance objectives in defense programs, including how tradeoffs are made, communicated, and evaluated across stakeholders to ensure mission success.
- Program Execution and Delivery: Identifying best practices and systemic changes that can improve program execution, reduce delays, and enhance delivery of capabilities to the warfighter.
- Strengthening Multi-Stakeholder Coordination: Examining how program managers can better coordinate across services, agencies, and industry partners to manage dependencies, align priorities, and ensure integrated capability delivery.
- Programmatic Risk and Uncertainty: Analyzing techniques for identifying, assessing, and mitigating technical, financial, and geopolitical risks in defense programs, including the use of predictive analytics, scenario planning, and adaptive management approaches.

Shipbuilding & U.S. Maritime Dominance

- Shipbuilding and Fleet Expansion: Investigating strategies to speed the acquisition and construction of major ships and submarines, reduce cost and schedule overruns, increase shipbuilding capacity, deploy autonomous solutions, and employ advanced manufacturing, digital twins, and other innovative technologies to meet construction and sustainment goals.
- Maritime Industrial Base: Exploring strategies and policies for revitalizing and expanding of the maritime industrial base, including investment in shipbuilding capabilities, port infrastructure, and workforce training and retention.

Space Systems Acquisition

- Rapid Space Acquisition: Examining outcomes, challenges, next steps, and lessons learned from the acquisition strategies, frameworks, structures, and partnerships utilized by the Space Force.
- Mission Assurance Frameworks: Investigating acquisition and sustainment strategies for reliability and survivability, including commercial solutions, interoperability, industry partnerships, and resilience of supply chain and commercial solutions.
- Test and Evaluation in Space Environments: Exploring new frameworks and methods for conducting test and evaluation in a manner that supports and accelerates the development and fielding of satellites, ground systems, and resilient space architectures that are secure, interoperable, and advance US strategic goals.

Technology Transition and Readiness

- Establishing Effective Technology Transition Partnerships: Creating an environment for collaboration between defense, industry, and academia to rapidly develop, test, and transition ideas into practical applications.

- Ensuring Adequate Resources for Technology Transition Readiness: Addressing the availability and adequacy of resources such as funding, personnel, infrastructure, and the capability and capacity of the industrial base for technology transition readiness.
- Improving Technology Readiness Assessment Processes: Enhancing the assessment process for technology readiness levels, integration risks, and manufacturing readiness levels.

Test and Evaluation

- Model-Based Systems Engineering: Examining the integration of MBSE approaches throughout the T&E lifecycle, including digital modeling of test scenarios, virtual verification and validation, automated test case generation, and model-based requirements verification to reduce physical testing requirements and accelerate system evaluation.
- Operational Testing: Investigating methods to improve the realism and relevance of operational testing environments, ensuring systems are evaluated under conditions that reflect actual combat scenarios, contested domains, and joint force operations.
- Test and Evaluation Timelines: Exploring strategies to streamline and accelerate T&E processes without compromising rigor, including approaches to early integration, iterative testing, and risk-based prioritization to support faster capability delivery.
- Modernization: Assessing the adequacy of current T&E infrastructure, tools, and simulation environments, and identifying opportunities for modernization to support emerging technologies such as AI, autonomous systems, and cyber capabilities.
- Mission-Based Test and Evaluation: Investigating framework improvements for testing system capabilities against mission requirements, including evaluation of interoperability, joint force integration, and mission thread analysis across multiple systems and domains.

Other topics that support “Accelerating Warfighting Capabilities”

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

1. **This is a research symposium and innovation summit**; panels focus on advancing the subject matter to improve outcomes for the warfighter. This year we are focusing on accelerating warfighting capabilities.
2. **Everyone who presents papers and panels at the symposium must submit a proposal.** We will only accept proposals from those who have responded to this call for the 23rd Annual Acquisition Research Symposium and Innovation Summit.
3. **We receive hundreds of proposals annually.** Selection committee members independently review and score each proposal; the committee meets to discuss proposals; panels are organized; and the program is set.
4. **Due to time constraints of the event, not all high-ranking papers will have space in the program.** For those meritorious papers that don't make the program cut, we will invite authors to submit papers for publication in the symposium proceedings.
5. **The event has up to 24 panels, 75 minutes each.** There are up to three (3) plenary panels. The committee will select plenary panels from panel submissions.
6. **Panel Organization.** A panel consists of a senior leader from DOD/services or industry to be the chair with three (3) research papers or two (2) research papers with the chair and a discussant.

- a. Chairs and presenters have no more than 15 minutes to present.
- b. In most cases, we organize the panels. However, we do accept panels organized by others.

DATES TO REMEMBER

- **Proposals are due by November 18, 2025.**
 - **Notifications will be sent by December 19, 2025.**
 - **Register for the event by March 2, 2026.**
 - **For best selection, secure hotel and flights by March 2, 2026.**
 - **Papers are required. They must be submitted by April 3, 2026**, to be included in the proceedings. The research-focused paper is no more than twenty (20) pages single-spaced in APA Citation 7th edition format, no endnotes. (Additional details will be sent at proposal selection.)
 - **Presentations must be submitted by May 1, 2026.**
 - The **Accelerating Warfighting Capabilities, NPS 23rd Annual Acquisition Research Symposium & Innovation Summit** will be held on **May 6-7, 2026**, in Monterey, California.
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GUIDELINES FOR PROPOSAL SUBMISSIONS

Submit **ALL Paper and Panel Proposals** to www.researchsymposium.com .

- Go to “Login” top right corner. Create an account if new or login. Click forgot password if needed to reset it.

For Paper Proposals:

1. **Title.** should be succinct and descriptive; use plain language with no acronyms.
2. **Keywords.** submit no more than 5 keywords that describe paper content.
3. **Is this a paper or panel?** select “paper”.
4. **Topic area.** select the topic that matches the paper the most.
5. **Submission requirements.** the above plus an abstract (<350 words), research issue/problem statement, expected research results with enough detail to inform the evaluation committee; and contact information for the presenter.
6. **Papers are required. They must be submitted by April 3, 2026**, to be included in the event proceedings. The research-focused paper is no more than twenty (20) pages single-spaced in APA format. More details to follow upon acceptance.
7. **Presentations.** no more than 15 minutes.

For Panel Proposals: If selected, you are responsible for organizing the panel including securing the panel chair. We retain the right to accept papers but not the panel, to add papers or a chair to any submitted panel.

1. **Submit all associated research papers first and separately.**
2. **Title.** should be succinct and descriptive; use plain language with no acronyms.

3. **Keywords.** submit no more than five (5) keywords that describe panel content.
 4. **Topic area.** select the topic that matches the panel the most.
 5. **Select “panel”.** Question: “Is this a paper or panel?”. **Only those proposals marked as panel will be considered as panel submissions.**
 6. **Abstract.** provide a succinct summary (<350 words) of the panel.
 7. **Research issue/problem statement.** identify the overall research theme that your panel seeks to address with enough detail to inform the evaluation committee.
 8. **Research results.** identify what you hope participants will gain from your panel content with enough detail to inform the evaluation committee.
 9. **Presenter.** identify the point of contact (POC) (name, title, org) who will coordinate the panel details.
 10. **Presenter email.** provide the POC email address of the person coordinating the panel details.
 11. **Panel details.** identify the papers associated with the panel (title, author, proposal #). Provide Name, title, org, email address of proposed discussants and panelists. (no acronyms).
 12. **Proposed Chair.** provide name, title and organization (no acronyms)
 13. **Proposed chair’s email address.**
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MAY 2025 BEHIND THE SCENES RECAP

The May 2025 Acquisition Research Symposium and Innovation Summit featured keynote speakers **Mr. Steven Morani**, performing the duties of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment, ([see here](#)) **Hon. Sean Stackley**, former Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Research, Development & Acquisition ([see here](#)) and **Doug Beck**, Director, Defense Innovation Unit ([see here](#)).

Symposium proceedings papers, presentations and student posters can be found in the **Defense Acquisition Research & Innovation Repository (DAIR)** www.dair.nps.edu.