

# **OUSD Announces Award of Third Party Assessment Contract**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Office of Under Secretary of Defense (OUSD) recently announced the award of the Third Party Assessment contract to Management and Training Consultants, Inc. (MTCI), headquartered in Dumfries, Va. The contract will begin Sept. 30, 2011.

The purpose of the Third Party Assessment contract is to assess the quality of off-duty postsecondary educational programs and services used by Service members regardless of location or duty assignment and to assist in the improvement of these education programs and services. Periodic assessments will ensure the education programs provided to Service members funded by a tuition assistance program are of the same high quality and meet the same academic criteria as that of other quality higher educational programs.

In the past, the Department of Defense (DoD) only reviewed schools operating on bases. In recent years, technology and the use of the Internet have expanded exponentially. Consequently, so did the number of Service members selecting distance learning schools for their postsecondary education opportunities. By FY10, enrollment via distance learning has increased to 71 percent. DoD will expand the number of schools to include institutions operating on-base, off-base and via distance learning. With the inclusion of these additional schools and the enhanced monitoring process, the new contract will help ensure Service members receive quality education. OUSD will review all findings and recommendations and track progress of corrective actions taken by the Services.

The contract will be managed by the Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES), located at Saufley Field Pensacola, Fla. DANTES supports the off-duty voluntary education programs of the DoD and conducts special projects and developmental activities in support of education-related DoD functions.