

## Onboarding and Placement — Start Here

*The Launchpad Sandbox is a one-stop learning space: the doctrine (what is durable), the literacy (where the facts live), the practice layer (how you train the skill), and the course and modules (how it is taught). If you are a new fellow, a coach, a working professional, or a student, this page tells you where to start — and, in about ten minutes, where you personally\* should start.\**

**The one sentence that frames the whole space.** *The concepts are durable; the tools are swappable* (doctrine/08). Everything you learn here is concept-first and stack-free — no product knowledge required, ever.

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### Start here — why this matters

Before you take the placement self-assessment, spend ten minutes on the front door. Read **Why GovCon Matters** — the mission narrative: what this industry actually is, what a capture feels like from the notice to the debrief, and what it means to win for a US company. It is the story that makes the rest of this space worth learning, and it is where the motivation comes from before the discipline has anything to bite on.

Then read a case. **Case 01** — the compliance-matrix win — is the best first taste. The case library holds anonymized, real-feeling win/loss cases patterned on public debriefs; each one ends with a debrief and a lesson. Read one before you read the doctrine, so that when the doctrine names a concept — win theme, compliance matrix, price realism, teaming, ghost theme — you have already seen it decide an actual pursuit.

The doctrine teaches you the rules of the game. The cases show you the game being played. Start with why, then with the case — then let the placement test below tell you where you go from there.

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### What's in the space

| Layer               | Where it lives                                                            | What it's for                                                    |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>The doctrine</b> | doctrine/ — ten short chapters                                            | The durable concepts. Read these first, in order.                |
| <b>The literacy</b> | literacy/ — glossary, acronyms, reading maps, money flow, further reading | The reference layer. Keep it open, don't read it cover-to-cover. |

| Layer                     | Where it lives                                                     | What it's for                                                                                   |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>The practice</b>       | <b>practice/</b> — a worked exemplar, a practice bank, answer keys | The drills that turn reading into doing.                                                        |
| <b>The teaching plans</b> | <b>modules/</b> — shared core + three audience tracks              | Session-by-session plans for a course or cohort.                                                |
| <b>The course</b>         | <b>course/</b> — syllabus, rubric, capstone                        | The full 14-week semester, if you are teaching or being taught.                                 |
| <b>The case</b>           | <b>case-study/ravonics.md</b>                                      | The one company everyone practices on.                                                          |
| <b>The alignment</b>      | <b>align/</b> — concept system map                                 | The same doctrine as the machine encodes it. Concepts never change here; the stack column does. |
| <b>Your study plan</b>    | <b>study-plans/</b> — one per persona                              | A week-by-week solo path matched to who you are.                                                |

If you want to see the whole discipline done once, end to end, read **the worked exemplar** — a full pursuit from solicitation to bid/no-bid, with the reasoning at every step. It is the fastest way to see what “learning this discipline” actually means.

## The two lanes

There are two doors into the same building:

1. **The college course** (semester, graded, three audience tracks) — the *curriculum* side. Students from Strategic Initiative, MBA, and MPA programs take the shared core, their track, and the capstone.
2. **The Launchpad fellowship** (levels, cohort, certification-ladder) — the *fellowship* side. The same doctrine, taught through the Launchpad ladder: **Ignite Curiosity** (the universal boot camp, built on the **SPARK Learning System™**), the **Innovator's Launchpad** levels **L1 Explorer** → **L2 Builder** → **L3 Architect** → **L4 Networker** → **L5 Leader**, the **Ignition Legacy Track** (for professionals 50+, modules M1–M9), **The Ascension** (executives), and **The Transcendence** (stewardship).

The two sides map onto each other (see the degree fellowship course crosswalk at the bottom of the align map): a Bachelor's-track student starts at L1 Ex-

plorer; a Master's student at L2 Builder; a Doctoral student at L3 Architect/L4 Networker; a Global-Impact / executive learner at L5 Leader.

**Wherever you enter, you learn the same doctrine.** The practice layer and study plans in this space work for both lanes.

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### If you're here for one of these roles, start here

- **A new fellow** — do the self-assessment below, then follow the level's starting path. You are climbing the Launchpad ladder; the levels below map directly to your program.
- **A coach or facilitator** — read the facilitator playbook and the coach study plan. Your job is to run the room, not to be the expert; the answer keys and the exemplar give you the backbone.
- **A working professional** — start with the solo professional study plan. You have real-world context, so you'll move faster through the doctrine and spend your time on the practice.
- **A student** — start with the student study plan, or — if you're enrolled — the syllabus. Your track (Strategic Initiative, MBA, or MPA) shapes the accent, not the doctrine.
- **A curious reader** — just read the ten doctrine chapters in order, then the worked exemplar. That is the whole course in miniature.

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### The placement self-assessment (about ten minutes)

Two parts. **Part 1** scores your current grasp of the doctrine. **Part 2** picks your lane. Combine them in the placement table.

#### Part 1 — How much of the doctrine do you already hold?

For each of the ten statements, be honest with yourself and pick the option that is true *today*:

| Option                                                  | Points |
|---------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| <b>I can explain this from memory and use it</b>        | 3      |
| <b>I recognize it and know where to find the answer</b> | 2      |
| <b>I've heard the term but couldn't explain it</b>      | 1      |
| <b>I have no idea</b>                                   | 0      |

1. The three kinds of federal money, and the difference between a contract and a grant.
2. The four identifiers (UEI, CAGE, NAICS, SAM.gov) and what each one does.

3. The six questions every solicitation answers — and the most important one.
4. What a compliance matrix is and why it exists.
5. The pursuit pipeline (the nine stages) and what a gate is.
6. The four parts of a gate, and why criteria must be written in advance.
7. What pWin is, and how a pursuit score is computed.
8. What price-to-win is, and why a too-low bid is dangerous.
9. The seven axes of the ORBITAL.
10. The Dream → ORBITAL → World lifecycle and the cosmology loop.

**Add your points.** Out of a possible 30:

| Score        | Your doctrine level                                                                   |
|--------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>0–5</b>   | Brand new. Start at <b>Ignite Curiosity / L1 Explorer</b> — doctrine 01 and 02 first. |
| <b>6–11</b>  | <b>L1 Explorer</b> — you have the edges; fill in the core.                            |
| <b>12–18</b> | <b>L2 Builder</b> — you can hold the shape; now practice it.                          |
| <b>19–24</b> | <b>L3 Architect</b> — you know the doctrine; sharpen the decisions.                   |
| <b>25–30</b> | <b>L4 Networker / L5 Leader</b> — you’re ready to teach and lead it.                  |

## Part 2 — Your lane

| If you are...                               | Your lane                                                                                                                   |
|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A college student in a degree program       | <b>College track</b> — shared core + your audience track (Strategic Initiative / MBA / MPA) + capstone.                     |
| A working professional under 50             | <b>Solo professional lane</b> — the doctrine fast, then heavy practice; position toward L3+ as you go.                      |
| A professional age 50+                      | <b>Ignition Legacy Track</b> — the same doctrine through the M1–M9 legacy sequence; your experience is an asset, not a gap. |
| An executive or senior leader               | <b>The Ascension lane</b> — you start at L4/L5; your work is portfolio, governance, and teaching others.                    |
| A coach / facilitator / would-be instructor | <b>Facilitator lane</b> — doctrine solid (aim for L3 before you run a room), then the facilitator playbook.                 |

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## The placement table — where you start, and in what order

Find your row (doctrine level from Part 1) and your lane (from Part 2). The “start here” column is your path through the whole space.

| Doctrine level      | Start here (in order)                                                                                                                                                                              | Milestone that proves you’re ready to move up                                                                                                      |
|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>L1 Explorer</b>  | 1. Doctrine 01–02. 2. The literacy glossary + how-to-read maps. 3. Practice exercises D01–D02 (answers to check). 4. The worked exemplar, Step 1–2.                                                | You can explain the three kinds of money, the four identifiers, and the six questions a solicitation answers — and you’ve done the D01–D02 drills. |
| <b>L2 Builder</b>   | 1. Doctrine 03–06. 2. The literacy money-flow + RFP/NOFO maps. 3. Practice exercises D03–D06 + SC-E1–E6. 4. The worked exemplar, Steps 1–4. 5. Your first compliance matrix on a real, closed RFP. | You can draw the pipeline, build a compliance matrix, fill an ORBITAL, and compute a score.                                                        |
| <b>L3 Architect</b> | 1. Doctrine 07–08. 2. Practice exercises D07–D08 + your track (SI/MBA/MPA). 3. The worked exemplar, Steps 5–6. 4. The capstone — build the full package on a real, closed solicitation.            | You can make and defend a bid/no-bid call with a scored, ORBITAL-backed package — and explain the lifecycle.                                       |

| Doctrine level      | Start here (in order)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Milestone that proves you're ready to move up                                                     |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>L4 Networker</b> | 1. The full doctrine again, faster. 2. The practice bank's integrated exercises (INT-E1, INT-E2). 3. The ecosystem view: your track's teaming/partnership session (SI-4 or MBA-4/MPA-4). 4. Lead a practice review (color-team style) of a peer's capstone. | You can run a review gate and defend a portfolio allocation, not just a single pursuit.           |
| <b>L5 Leader</b>    | 1. The facilitator playbook. 2. The coach study plan. 3. Teach a session to someone else — the real test. 4. Own the governance: design a gate charter for an organization.                                                                                 | You have taught the doctrine to at least one other person and can design an organization's gates. |

**The Ignition Legacy Track** (professionals 50+): don't linearize through the levels. Take the doctrine in order (all ten — your experience makes them fast), then work the legacy modules M1–M9 in the spirit of the same doctrine: M2 (Contract Mastery) maps to doctrine 01–02, M3 (ORBITAL) to doctrine 06, M4 (Proposal Writing) to the practice bank's compliance + design drills, M5 (PWIN & Dream Score) to doctrine 05, M7 (The Harness) to the governance layer, M9 (Legacy Builder) to the lifecycle. The solo professional study plan is a good spine, sped up.

**The Ascension lane** (executives): you start at L4/L5. Skip the linear grind; do the doctrine in a weekend (it is ten short chapters), read the worked exemplar, then go straight to the governance and portfolio material (doctrine 04, 05, 07, 09, 10; the SI track; the L5 row above).

## How “getting certified” works here — and what it is not

A few things to set straight before you start, so you don't chase the wrong goal:

- **This curriculum does not confer a federal certification.** Nothing here issues a security clearance, an SBA certification, or a license. The

SBA certifications (HUBZone, 8(a), WOSB/VOSB) are obtained from the SBA; the registrations (UEI, CAGE, SAM) are obtained from SAM.gov. This course teaches you *what those are, why they matter, and how to use them* — see the FAQ and further reading.

- **The Launchpad ladder has its own levels** (L1–L5) that certify *progression through the doctrine*, not a government status. Your placement above tells you where you’d start on that ladder.
- **The capstone is the proof.** The single most credible thing you can produce after this course is a complete pursuit package — compliance matrix, ORBITAL, score, bid/no-bid — built from a real, closed solicitation. That artifact is worth more to an employer than any certificate. That is what the capstone and the worked exemplar are for.

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### A note on pace

- **Full-time student:** the student study plan is ~10 weeks alongside a course, or ~6 weeks focused.
- **Working professional:** the solo professional plan is ~8 weeks at 3–4 hours a week.
- **Coach/facilitator:** the coach plan is ~5 weeks to readiness, then you run a cohort using the facilitator playbook.

Wherever you land, the rule is the same: **do the practice, don’t just read it.** Reading the doctrine teaches you the words; the practice bank and the exemplar teach you the skill.