The Data Catalog Vocabulary Application Profile (DCAT-AP) is a specification based on the Data Catalog Vocabulary (DCAT) for describing public sector datasets in Europe. Its purpose is to enable cross-data portal data sharing.

If you want to align your metadata requirements (terms) with DCAT-AP, follow these general steps:

* **Understand Your Current Metadata Schema**:
  + Start by taking a comprehensive inventory of your current metadata terms and definitions.
  + Document each term, its definition, and possible values or data types (if applicable).
* **Study the DCAT-AP Specification**:
  + Familiarize yourself with the DCAT-AP classes, properties, and controlled vocabularies. This will give you an overview of what is available and how it is structured.
  + Documentation for the DCAT-AP can usually be found on official EU websites or repositories related to open data standards.
* **Mapping & Alignment**:
  + For each term in your current metadata schema, identify a corresponding class or property in DCAT-AP.
  + If a direct match exists, make a note of it.
  + If a direct match doesn’t exist, consider whether the term can be mapped to an extended class or property in DCAT-AP, or whether it can be represented using a combination of available classes or properties.
* **Address Gaps**:
  + If you find terms in your metadata that don’t have a corresponding representation in DCAT-AP, you will need to decide how to address these gaps.
  + You might consider extending the DCAT-AP schema (by creating custom classes or properties), or revising your metadata schema to better fit with DCAT-AP.
* **Document Your Decisions**:
  + Maintain a crosswalk or mapping document that records how each term in your metadata is aligned with DCAT-AP. This will be valuable for future reference, training, or auditing purposes.
* **Implement the Alignment**:
  + Update your metadata capture, storage, and publishing tools to use the aligned schema.
  + If you're developing a new system, ensure that the software respects the DCAT-AP alignment.
* **Training & Communication**:
  + Ensure that stakeholders and users are aware of the changes and understand the reasons for aligning with DCAT-AP.
  + Offer training sessions or materials to those who will be entering or using the metadata to familiarize them with the new schema and its implications.
* **Maintain & Review**:
  + Standards like DCAT-AP can evolve over time. Stay informed about updates or changes to the DCAT-AP specification.
  + Periodically review your alignment and adjust as necessary to accommodate changes to both your organizational needs and the DCAT-AP standard.