



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
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NAVMC 1560.25

From: Commandant of the Marine Corps
To: Distribution List

Subj: MARINE CORPS GUIDELINES FOR TUITION ASSISTANCE (SHORT TITLE: TA GUIDELINES)

Ref: See enclosure (1)

Encl: (1) References
(2) Tuition Assistance Orientation Brief--Topics to Be Covered

1. Purpose. This NAVMC establishes procedures for use of Marine Corps Tuition Assistance (TA) in accordance with references (a) through (s).

2. Background. Marine Corps TA encourages and supports active-duty and Active Reserve (AR) personnel to access Post-Secondary Voluntary Education (VolEd) opportunities. VolEd opportunities are pursued during off-duty time, delivered by appropriately accredited institutions of higher learning (IHL) on campus, at campus resident centers, on military installations, and using technology through distance learning, regardless of duty station, independent duty, or deployment. References (h) and (s) remain the principal policies to provide requirements on Department of Defense (DoD) VolEd programs.

3. Execution

a. The Deputy Commandant, Manpower and Reserve Affairs (DC M&RA) centrally manages TA funding for the Marine Corps with administrative support from the Naval Education and Training Professional Development Center (NETPDC), per reference (s).

b. NETPDC manages the Navy College Management Information System (NCMIS), per reference (s), and the Oracle Business Intelligence Education Enterprise (OBIEE). NCMIS is an automated TA management system accessed online for the purpose of authorizing TA funding for all eligible active-duty and AR Marine personnel. NETPDC also processes TA invoices, records grades, and initiates TA reimbursement when required, per reference (s).

c. Marine Corps installation VolEd personnel who have completed all security clearance requirements for employment in the installation VolEd center, and for access to NCMIS, are eligible to provide authorization of TA funding in full compliance with all DoD and Marine Corps policy and regulations for use of the TA benefit.

(1) The Education Services Officer (ESO) is responsible for the installation VolEd office, establishing and building relationships with all

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Unit Education Officers (UEO), as well as overseeing and coordinating all installation VolEd activities, per reference (s).

(2) The installation ESO is responsible for determining TA authorization authority among all installation VolEd personnel with the proper clearance and NCMIS access.

d. Marine Corps installation VolEd personnel must not process TA for United States Navy or Coast Guard personnel per reference (s).

4. Eligibility

a. TA is authorized for Active Duty Marine Corps personnel to include AR, who meet eligibility criteria per reference (s).

b. Initial and continued usage of TA is at Commanders' discretion. Commanders, Sergeants Major, UEOs, and Command Approval Officers (CAOs) ensure Marines meet all eligibility criteria per reference (s), and have completed all Professional Military Education (PME) requirements appropriate to their rank, per references (k) and (l). Marines submit documentation of PME completion to the UEO prior to submission of the first TA request, as well as the first TA request following any subsequent promotion.

5. Funding Provisions and Restrictions

a. TA is authorized only for tuition charges and tuition fees, up to one hundred percent of costs including lab, technology, and distance learning fees at, but not exceeding semester hour (SH), quarter hour (QH), or clock hour (CH) caps for undergraduate and graduate courses, and fiscal year (FY) ceilings, per references (h) and (s). Currently, this stands at \$250/SH, \$166.67/QH, \$16.67/CH for the per credit caps, and \$4500/FY for the ceiling, the maximum Military Tuition Rate (MTR) allowed per reference (h). The DoD Interservice Voluntary Education Board (IVEB) annually reviews all TA caps and ceilings, per reference (h); the Marine Corps will comply with any DoD proposed changes to the MTR.

(1) The following equivalents are applied regarding earned academic credit: 1 SH = 1.5 QH = 15 CH. All criteria in this NAVMC listed as SH are adjusted to these proportions as necessary.

(2) Marines are responsible for costs exceeding authorized TA funding caps and ceilings, as well as all non-tuition fees including, but not limited to costs associated with room, board, equipment, supplies, books/materials, exams, insurance, parking, transportation, admissions, registration, or fines, per reference (h). Marines with at least two years active duty, are encouraged to consider MGIB "Top Up" for such costs. All Marines with costs exceeding TA caps are strongly encouraged to contact their base VolEd center for assistance.

b. Marines must be eligible for promotion per references (k) and (l), or, if the Marine is in the last tour of duty, must qualify for an Honorable Discharge. This is determined by command leadership as represented by the UEO.

c. Marines have no minimum time in service (T-I-S) requirement prior to the utilization of TA. Additionally, Marines awaiting training status are eligible to utilize TA, per reference (s).

d. Prior to command approval, first-time TA applicants demonstrate readiness for the post-secondary education classroom and subsequent use of TA funds, by completing the following:

(1) The Personal Financial Management (PFM) training through the Personal Readiness Seminar (PRS) at the first permanent duty station, or on any Marine Corps installation, or through completion of the PRS Survival Skills Training J3OP-US1395 on Joint Knowledge Online; completion of the PFM training is submitted to the installation VolEd office prior to attending the TA Orientation Brief;

(2) The TA Orientation Brief per reference (s); topics addressed during the TA Orientation Brief are located in enclosure (2) to this NAVMC;

(3) The skills and interests surveys on Career Path Decide (CPD).

(4) Meeting at least one of the following criteria:

(a) A minimum Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT) score of 50;
or,

(b) A minimum General Technical (GT) score of 100 from the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB); or,

(c) Successful completion of at least 10 SH of post-secondary coursework at the Freshman level, or higher, with each course earning a minimum of a C (2.0) grade; or,

(d) Successful completion of the Academic Skills Program (ASP) in the classroom, or, the Online Academic Skills Course (OASC); direction to ASP or OASC is accomplished through the installation VolEd personnel; or,

(e) Completion of the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE), with a minimum score of 11.

(5) If none of these criteria are met, but the PFM training, TA brief and CPD surveys are complete, the ESO retains the discretion to authorize TA funding for one course per term until 10 SH have been completed successfully. Successful completion is indicated by no grade earned less than a C, per reference (h).

e. Installation VolEd personnel document Marine academic readiness to the official TA account in NCMIS.

f. First-time TA applicants receive authorized TA funding for only one course, unless documentation is provided that the Marine has completed at least 31 SH within a traditional face-to-face classroom academic setting, at a minimum grade point average (GPA) of 2.5, on the 4-point scale.

g. TA applications are submitted no more than 60 days prior to the start date of the class.

h. Marines may submit more than one TA application per academic term, but TA applications do not contain more than one course per application.

i. Marines may not have more than two TA-funded classes active at any given time.

j. TA must be authorized only for one course in the next academic term, per reference (s), if: the undergraduate cumulative GPA falls between 2.0 and 2.5, or the graduate cumulative GPA falls below 3.0; a grade of "D" or "F" is received in any course during the previous term in which TA was utilized (grade of "C" for graduate courses), per reference (h); or, a voluntary or involuntary withdrawal occurs from any course during the previous term in which TA was utilized, per reference (s). Exceptions may be submitted to the installation ESO for consideration.

k. TA funds for approved involuntary withdrawal waivers count toward individual FY ceilings.

l. Career and technical education certificate programs eligible for TA funding must:

(1) Be accredited by an accrediting body recognized by the Department of Education, per reference (s);

(2) Be approved by the Department of Veterans Affairs, per reference (s);

(3) Have a signed DOD Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), per reference (h).

m. Marines must utilize TA toward one academic degree at the next level higher than that currently held by the Marine, in accordance with references (h) and (s).

(1) The academic degree ranks are as follows in ascending order: Certificate, Associate's, Bachelor's, Master's/Post Baccalaureate.

(2) The academic certificate may be at any level, if completion of a Master's degree is not a requirement for admission into the program, per reference (h).

(3) Marines who previously have not earned an Associate's, Bachelor's, or Master's, may use TA toward more than one academic certificate. This is encouraged for the pursuit of 'stackable certificate' opportunities. This option is relinquished immediately upon completion of any undergraduate degree.

n. The maximum number of SH allowed for TA funding is capped at Undergraduate-138; Graduate-45, per reference (h).

o. Degree pre-requisites or developmental courses can be funded by TA, but must be included on the Marine's education plan and count towards the TA funding cap at the level of the degree pursued per reference (s).

p. Marines are strongly encouraged to submit an education plan prior to authorization of TA funds. The ESO retains the discretion to authorize TA funding for up to four courses - no more than one per academic term - before the education plan must be posted to the Marine's web TA record, per reference (s).

q. TA is not authorized for non-credit courses, training programs, or programs under continuing education or workforce development per reference (s).

r. TA may be used for foreign language courses outside of a degree plan. This is limited to those languages identified by the Under Secretary of Defense (USD) as strategic stronghold or immediate investment languages, published annually in a memorandum from the USD, per reference (s). Languages Dominant-in-the-Force, and those in which the DoD has sufficient strategic capability will not receive authorization for TA funding unless they are part of a degree plan. Authority to declare Dominant-in-the-Force languages rests solely with USD (Personnel & Readiness), who assesses the DoD-wide foreign language capacity annually and publishes a corresponding list, per reference (s).

s. Marines who have completed an initial Master's degree granted by a resident Service Professional Military Education institution, or by National Defense University, or The Eisenhower School, are eligible for TA funding toward a second master's degree. The Marine loses this eligibility if more than one master's degree is held. Marines should present transcripts from the conferring institution, to installation VolEd personnel prior to completing TA Orientation.

t. Marines who fail to complete a course successfully must reimburse received TA funds, per references (h) and (s). Successful course completion, is defined for the purpose of reimbursement as a grade of "C" or higher for undergraduate courses, a "B" or higher for graduate courses, and a "pass" for "pass/fail" courses, per reference (h). Received TA funds for unsuccessful course completion will not count toward the FY ceiling once reimbursement is posted to the Marine's TA account.

u. Reimbursement for course withdrawals indicated by a grade of "W" and related to duty, medical or personal or family emergency circumstances, may be waived, per reference (s). TA funds for approved involuntary withdrawal waivers count toward individual FY ceilings, per reference (s). All reimbursement procedures and related pertinent information are obtained from installation VolEd personnel.

(1) Waiver memo is signed by the commanding officer (CO), or the UEO, and submitted to the installation ESO for review. Waiver requests must not be submitted directly to NETPDC, per reference (s).

(2) The waiver request should contain supporting documentation including, where appropriate, Temporary Assignment of Duty (TAD) or Permanent Change of Station (PCS) Orders, and a descriptive narrative explaining the change beyond individual control and unknown at the time of the TA request, per reference (s).

(3) The ESO determines if justification for a waiver is warranted, and if so, forwards the waiver onto NETPDC with additional support statements, per reference (s).

v. Open issues in Marines' NCMIS TA accounts, including unresolved Incompletes (indicated by a grade of "I" on the academic transcript), reimbursement issues, and waivers, should be resolved, and posted to the Marine's NCMIS TA account prior to authorization of future TA requests.

w. TA is not authorized for fees related to certifications, license exams, or credentials, per reference (s).

x. Utilization of authorized TA funds requires T-I-S beyond the end date of the academic term, regardless of the course level funded. Marines must reimburse paid TA funds for T-I-S not met, at the percentage equal to that of the unmet T-I-S, per reference (s). Marines do not reimburse TA to the installation VolEd Center, per reference (s), but may obtain all pertinent information regarding TA reimbursement from the installation VolEd Center ESO, or any VolEd Center personnel. T-I-S requirements are as follows: Commissioned Officers must serve 24 months per reference (h); Enlisted personnel will serve 60 days, per reference (h); Limited Duty Officers (LDOs), Chief Warrant Officers (CWOs) and Warrant Officers (WOs) who do not hold a Baccalaureate degree will serve 60 days, per reference (h); LDOs, CWOs, and WO who have completed a Baccalaureate degree must serve 24 months, per reference (h); Reserve Component Officers on active-duty orders/mobilization must serve 24 months, per references (h) and (s). Officers who end their active service (EAS) and transition seamlessly (no break in service of any kind) to AR programs may use service time in the AR program toward the 24-month T-I-S requirement, per reference (h).

y. Marines assigned to Military Occupation School or residential PME (including, but not limited to: Corporals Course, Sergeants Course, Career Course, Advanced Course, or any other special professional education or training program, such as Skill Bridge) must not receive TA funding until they return to their regular or permanent duty, per reference (s).

z. Marines in a Marine Corps Enlisted Commissioning Education Program (MECEP) or a Staff Non-Commissioned Officer Degree Completion Program (SNCO DCP) may use TA toward their degrees during Summer terms if required to serve Active Duty fulltime instead of taking courses in their MECEP or SNCO DCP, per references (h) and (s).

aa. Marines selected for attendance to the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy (USASMA) as taught through the U.S. Army NCO Leadership Center of Excellence (NCO LCE), under the umbrella of the Combined Arms Center and Army University, may use TA toward in-class or online post-Baccalaureate courses at the IHLs on post, with Articulation Agreements through the USASMA. The NCO LCE provides the list of partner IHLs and the specific Master's degree programs toward which TA can be used, as well as the number of credits earned toward the degree to be awarded through participation in the USASMA. Marines may not use TA toward any degree or certificate at any level outside of these partner programs or IHLs while in attendance at the USASMA, but may submit TA requests upon their return to duty stations within full compliance of Marine Corps TA policies and regulations as stated within this NAVMC.

ab. Marines attending vocational/technical certification programs with more than one class or module receive TA funding for a maximum of two classes or modules at a time.

6. Fiscal Instructions

a. Funds to administer TA are appropriated annually and must be available to fund-approving authorities through NETPDC, the centrally managed TA authority, per reference (s).

b. DC M&RA must provide NETPDC with a funding ceiling with limits to obligation authority. Individual TA limits are defined by DC M&RA and not subject to waivers per reference (s).

c. The start date of the academic term of a TA-funded course determines the chargeable Fiscal Year (FY) appropriation. TA requests received in one FY for courses starting in the next FY must wait until the next FY to receive authorization of TA funds per reference (s).

d. NETPDC must fund all courses, regardless of length, immediately upon receiving the invoice prepared by the institution through the Wide Area Work Flow (WAWF) system, per reference (s).

e. TA funding requests cannot be authorized retroactively, per reference (s). Requests for TA funding must be submitted and have received command approval through a unit CAO appointed by the UEO, no later than 24 hours prior to the course start date, per references (h) and (s).

f. TA funding authorizations must not occur between 15-30 September, to allow NETPDC to close out all records for the current FY, per reference (s). Requests for TA funding for courses with a start date between 15-30 September, must have command approval via a unit CAO by 12 September, to receive TA funding authorization by 14 September, per reference (s).

g. It is imperative that TA requests are complete and accurate. The application should contain the correct school code, the course start and end dates, and course number and title, as stated in the school's academic catalog. The installation ESO retains the discretion to require the use of a Cost Verification Statement to ensure complete and accurate information on the TA request, per reference (s).

h. Changes to the TA voucher to ensure total accuracy of the document, must be made by installation VolEd personnel prior to the end of the school's Drop/Add period, per reference (s). The Marine should contact installation VolEd personnel immediately, to execute such changes, or, as necessary to cancel the voucher document.

i. If both the academic term start and end date need to be changed on an existing TA voucher document, the document is cancelled, and the Marine submits a new TA request. The academic term start date should not be changed once the term has begun.

j. Grades are submitted to NETPDC within 30 days after the course end date, per reference (h).

(1) If grades are not received, a communication of TA indebtedness resolution (via email and/or postal mail written letter) is issued to the student Marine.

(2) A pay checkage, DD Form 139, is initiated if no response to the indebtedness communication is received within 30 days of its issuance.

(3) Grade reporting is the responsibility of the DoD MOU institution, however, the ultimate responsibility of ensuring the timely application of grades to the Marine's TA record rests with the Marine, per reference (h).

k. Individual student Marines who receive a grade of "I" - Incomplete - for a TA-funded course have up to six months from the term end date, to successfully covert the grade to that which is successful per reference (h). The school's deadline for completion of an "Incomplete" takes precedence if said deadline is shorter than 6 months, per reference (s). The "I" grade is resolved prior to the submission of any further TA requests.

7. Administration

a. Marines must contact installation VolEd personnel to ensure full compliance with all current Marine Corps TA policies and criteria in accordance with this NAVMC and per references (h) and (s).

b. TA authorization is contingent upon responsible stewardship of available funds by the installation's ESO and all VolEd personnel, per reference (s). The ESO retains the discretion to treat each TA application solely on the merits of the individual case.

c. Installation ESOs coordinate with Public Affairs Offices, Career Retention Specialists, and local commands via the Marine Corps Community Services (MCCS) Director to ensure that all eligible Marines are aware of available VolEd Program opportunities. Personnel provides information and advisement devoid of bias and prejudice, per reference (s).

d. TA funding is discretionary. Command approval for a Marine's TA request is contingent upon the unit's anticipated mission requirements and the UEO's concurrence that the Marine can meaningfully fully participate, meet all course requirements, and complete all academic and term demands as determined by the institution and the course instructor. The UEO is given this additional collateral duty, by the commanding officer who confers all "By Direction Authority" on the UEO for the unit's VolEd matters, per reference (s).

e. The course instructor, nor the institution must not alter the course requirements, or academic term demands for the Marine, either in favor of, or counter to those requirements and demands put forth to other non-military students in the course, per references (h) and (s). Attention to command schedule commitments that may preclude successful course completion, remains vital to the success of the Marine Corps TA program per the policies contained herein, per reference (s).

f. Commands should coordinate whenever possible with the installation ESO in advance of scheduled deployments, to assist deploying Marines wishing to pursue VolEd opportunities, per reference (s).

(1) Marines deployed to other Marine Corps installations are eligible for TA through the installation's VolEd office at either the installation from which they deploy, or to which they deploy.

(2) TA for east-coast deployments and for Marines assigned to duty at non-Marine Corps installations or other remote locations east of the Mississippi River, is processed by the VolEd office on either MCB Camp Lejeune, or MCAS Cherry Point, per reference (s).

(3) TA for west-coast deployments and for Marines assigned to duty at non-Marine Corps installations or other remote locations west of the

Mississippi River, is processed by the VolEd office on either MCB Camp Pendleton, or MCAS Miramar, per reference (s).

(4) TA for deployments to Okinawa is processed through MCB Camp Butler, per reference (s).

(5) TA for Marines on Recruiting Duty is processed at two locations: Recruiters west of the Mississippi River should contact the MCRD San Diego CA VolEd Center. Recruiters east of the Mississippi River should contact the MCRD Parris Island SC VolEd Center, per reference (s).

(6) TA for Marines on Inspector-Instructor Duty is processed at Marine Forces Reserve, per reference (s). Contact information for any Marine Corps installation VolEd office is obtained from any VolEd office.

g. The "Student Work Week" expectation maintains for academic guidance purposes, at three hours/week over a 16-week academic term, for every SH earned, to include class time, adjusted proportionately for the varied lengths of academic terms, per reference (h).

h. Installation ESOs ensure VolEd staff prepare and participate in the Marine Corps Certification Program (MCFP) site reviews as required and demonstrate compliance with all standards in the program resource guides located on the HQMC SharePoint site: https://usmc-sharepoint-mil.us/sites/dcmra_family_mfn/Pages/MFCertification.aspx., per references (q) and (r).

8. Marines remain encouraged to participate in all DoD programs under the management of P&PR, per reference (s), including, but not limited to:

a. United States Military Apprenticeship Program;

b. College Level Examination Program (CLEP)/Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support Subject Standardized tests (DSST);

c. Marine Corps Credentialing Opportunities On-Line.

9. Information. Headquarters Marine Corps (HQMC), Manpower and Reserve Affairs, Marine and Family Programs Division (MF), Personal and Professional Readiness Branch (MFR) maintains and updates information in this NAVMC as required.

10. Applicability. This NAVMC is applicable to the Active Component, members of the Selected Reserve, Marines on Active-Duty Operational Support Orders, their families and when authorized by law, other populations such as civilian personnel.

11. Certification. This NAVMC is effective the date signed.

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M. C. Balocki
Director
Marine and Family
Programs Division

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References

- (a) 38 U.S.C. Ch 30
- (b) 10 U.S.C. Ch 1606
- (c) 38 U.S.C. Ch 33
- (d) DoD Instruction 1341.13 CH-1, "Post-911 GI Bill," November 8, 2023
- (e) 5 U.S.C. 552a
- (f) SECNAV M-5210.1
- (g) SECNAVINST 5211.5F
- (h) DoD Instruction 1322.25 CH-4, "Voluntary Education Programs," April 2, 2020
- (i) DoD Instruction 1322.19 CH-1, "Voluntary Education Programs in Overseas Areas," April 23, 2020
- (j) MCO 1130.53R
- (k) MCO P1400.32D, CH-2, Volume 2
- (l) MCO P1400.31C, CH-1, Volume 1
- (m) MCO 1616.1
- (n) MCO 5210.11F
- (o) MCO 1230.5C
- (p) DoD Instruction 1322.16, "Montgomery GI Bill Program," December 28, 2022
- (q) DoD Instruction 1342.22, "Military Family Readiness," August 5, 2021
- (r) NAVMC 1700.4
- (s) MCO 1560.25

Tuition Assistance Orientation Brief--Topics to Be Covered

Introduction, Contact Information of Installation VOLED Center Staff

- ESO
- Specialists/Counselors
- Technicians, Administrators (if applicable), and P&PD Advisors
- VOLED Center Phone Number and Email Address (if applicable)
- Other P&PD Sections - I&R, PFM, Transition, Libraries and LRCs

VOLED Center Services

- Academic, Career and Technical Program Advising
- Military Education Benefits Programs (including TA)
- Financial Aid Information, Advising and Guidance
- Available Testing Services - Military Classification, Admissions, and Credit-by-Exam (CLEP/DSST)
- Academic Skills Program
- Connection to Schools

Post-Secondary Education Programs Options, Terminology, Environment

- Academic credit - Semester, Quarter, Clock
- Diploma/Degree Options - Certificate, Associates, Bachelor's, Master's/Graduate
- Course Category Breakdowns - GenEd, Major/Core, Lower and Upper-Level Electives, Graduate and Cognate (as applicable)

Academic and Career Counseling

- Current MOS
- Ideal Position upon completion of active-duty service
- Chosen field of study and passion for knowledge
- Finding the right life-career balance - pros and cons: the more education, the higher the salary and the consequences
- Critical thinking and problem solving skills

Tuition Assistance (TA) Policies and Procedures for Initial and Continued Use

- Policy Documents - VoEd MCO, MARADMINS, FY TA Guidelines
- First-Time TA Users - TA Orientation per policy, regulations and guidelines, submission of degree plan
- Personal Readiness Seminar - Personal Financial Management Course
- TA Request procedures - application, approval, authorization, grade reporting, reimbursing or waiver of reimbursement
- WEB TA documentation