



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
THE ARMY UNIVERSITY
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FORT LEAVENWORTH, KS 66027-2301

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6 September 2023

MEMORANDUM FOR

Army Continuing Education System, G-1, U.S. Army Installation Management
Command (IMHR-E/Ms. Moorash), 2405 Gun Shed Road,
Fort Sam Houston, TX 78234-1223

Army National Guard Education Oversight Branch, National Guard Bureau (ARNG-
HRH-C/Dr. Hardy), 111 South George Mason Drive, Arlington, VA 22204-1382
Services and Support Division, G-1, U.S. Army Reserve Command (AFRC-
PRS/Ms.Giraldo), 4710 Knox Street, Fort Bragg, NC 28310-5000

SUBJECT: Updates to Army Credentialing Assistance Policy

1. Summary of Changes.

a. Update, 30 August 2023.

(1) Custom quote upload was removed from the CA Goal and moved to the CA request and updated in 7. f. The previous requirement required Soldiers to upload the custom quote within the credentialing goal.

(2) Custom quotes moved to CA request and instructions provided 9.c.(4).

(3) Exams, books, materials are unable to be split payment and updated in 9.c.(5).

2. References:

a. Department of Defense Instruction 1322.33, DoD Credentialing Programs, 13 October 2021.

b. Department of Defense Instruction 1322.25, Voluntary Education Programs, 1 March 2011, Incorporating Change 4, Effective 2 April 2020.

c. Army Regulation (AR) 621-5, Army Continuing Education System, 28 October 2019.

d. AR 600-8-2, Suspension of Favorable Personnel Actions (Flag), 5 April 2021.

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e. AR 621-1, Advanced Education Programs and Requirements for Military Personnel, 11 December 2019.

f. Updates to Army Credentialing Assistance Policy Based on the Upgraded ArmyIgnitED Implementation, dated 13 October 2022.

3. Purpose: This policy memorandum updates policy guidance that supersedes the previous Credentialing Assistance Policy dated 13 October 2022 (reference 1f).

4. Applicability: This policy applies to the Regular Army (RA), the Army National Guard/Army National Guard of the United States (ARNG), and the U.S. Army Reserve (USAR).

5. CA Eligibility: Soldiers must complete Basic Combat Training (BCT) to be eligible for CA. In accordance with DODI 1322.25, Voluntary Education Programs, Reserve Component (Army Reserve and Army National Guard) Soldiers are exempt from the requirement to first complete BCT before being authorized to receive CA. There is no military education code for the completion of BCT in our source data feed, but all Soldiers who graduate from BCT will have a common access card (CAC) and the correct data submitted in IPPS-A to access their benefits in ArmyIgnitED. Reserve Component Soldiers who are not graduates of BCT must be issued a CAC by their units in order to access their benefits in ArmyIgnitED. There is no CA "stopper" in ArmyIgnitED for military training eligibility. The CAC will be the proof of eligibility for all Soldiers. Prior to pursuing CA, the education level in ArmyIgnitED must reflect that a high school diploma or equivalency diploma was completed.

6. Exclusions: The following Soldiers are ineligible for CA:

a. Contracted Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) scholarship cadets, including those receiving room and board benefits in lieu of tuition and fees. This restriction includes any period(s) of temporary suspension of scholarship benefits, leave of absence and while school is out of session.

b. ROTC cadets contracted under the Green to Gold ROTC Program.

c. Soldiers flagged under provisions of AR 600-8-2.

d. Soldiers approved for voluntary separation or who have received notice of involuntary separation and do not have enough time remaining in service to

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complete the credentialing course or exam 30 days prior to separating from the Army.

e. Soldiers without sufficient time-in-service to complete the CA course or exam.

f. Soldiers assigned to the Individual Ready Reserve or Inactive National Guard.

7. CA Authorizations:

a. Soldiers can pursue any credential found in Army Credentialing Opportunities On-Line (COOL) and may work on multiple credentials simultaneously or sequentially. While multiple credentials can be requested, failure to submit grades (completion certificates) will create a hold on Soldier accounts preventing further requests from being submitted.

b. CA may be authorized for the of payment of classroom, hands-on, online or blended training and courses, materials, manuals, textbooks, processing fees, test fees and other expenses related to the attainment or recertification of credentials.

c. CA is subject to the same funding ceiling as Tuition Assistance (TA). A Soldier may use both TA and CA; however, the combined usage by any Soldier shall not exceed the fiscal year (FY) TA limit. The Army reserves the right to limit the amount of CA funding that Soldiers can use for certain credentials.

d. Before receiving CA, the Soldier must establish an ArmyIgnitED account. Account registration and activation may require Soldiers to update their personnel record through their unit S1 administrative office.

e. Soldiers must sign the electronic user agreement acknowledging compliance with Army CA policies and procedures each time they create a CA request.

f. Soldiers must declare a credentialing goal in terms of a credential in ArmyIgnitED prior to requesting funding. Goals may be auto-approved if requested for the first time. CA requests may be submitted off of the same goal until all credits are completed. If a duplicate goal needs to be requested, the Soldier must contact the Army Credentialing Assistance Program Office (ACAPO) via ArmyIgnitED messaging to request a new goal or an additional credit be added.

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g. Soldiers must contact the vendor prior to submitting their credentialing request to obtain a custom quote. If required, Soldiers must register for the course or exam without any out of pocket payment.

h. Soldiers are not authorized to prepay for a course or exam using personal funds while a CA request is pending approval. In cases where Soldiers prepay, reimbursement for Soldiers' out-of-pocket expenses is not authorized.

i. Soldiers are required to upload a custom quote within each CA request in ArmyIgnitED with the following exceptions. Soldiers who are requesting CompTIA, Pearson Vue and International Board of Specialty Certification must submit a screenshot of the cost from the vendor website in lieu of the custom quote.

j. CA may be used in combination with other Federal benefits such as the GI Bill, TA, local or command funded programs, Service-funded programs (e.g., education-related incentive or bonus or advanced civil schooling) and military training programs that incorporate certification and licensing funding to cover any gaps between the benefits and the costs charged by the credentialing vendor. However, the combination of CA and the Federal benefits cannot generate an overpayment beyond the costs charged by the vendor.

8. CA Exclusions and Limitations:

a. Soldiers must obtain an ArmyIgnitED account and request CA for credentialing courses and exams through ArmyIgnitED.

b. Soldiers may not use CA to repeat successfully completed preparatory portions of a credential, other than for those areas required for renewal of the credential.

c. Soldiers with dual civilian and military status cannot use CA and Army Civilian Training, Education and Development Systems (ACTEDS) funds concurrently for the same course.

d. Soldiers may use CA to pursue credentials associated with doctoral level degrees but cannot use CA to fund doctoral classes.

e. CA is not authorized for:

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(1) Preparatory classes for college or graduate admissions testing such as the Scholastic Assessment Test, Graduate Record Examination or Law School Aptitude Test.

(2) Career Skills Programs.

(3) Required credentials for military occupational specialties (MOS), as the funds for these credentials come from Army training institutions and career management field proponents.

(4) Professional credentials, to include renewals, which are a prerequisite for appointment in the Armed Forces.

(5) Apprenticeships, Internships or Externships.

9. Credentialing Assistance Request Procedures and Timelines:

a. Prior to being approved for CA, Soldiers are encouraged to meet with a CA Virtual Counselor found in Army COOL, or an Army Education Counselor, either virtually or in person, for information regarding CA program policies and procedures.

b. ACAPO has up to the day of the start date to process the case and move to the Central Billing Office (CBO) for payment. In certain circumstances (i.e. Continuing Resolution, delay in funding), CBO may pay after the start date.

c. Once ACAPO approves the credentialing goal or it is auto-approved:

(1) Soldiers must submit separate CA requests in ArmyIgnitED for each credentialing course, each exam and books and materials (bundles are not authorized).

(2) CA requests must be submitted not earlier than 45 days, but not later than 90 days, prior to the start date of either the course or the exam.

(3) The end date of the requested course or exam must be within one calendar year (365 days) of the start date, or within 31 days of the Soldier's ETS date, and the course must start in the FY that the request was funded.

(4) Soldiers must submit custom quotes for each CA request submitted. Quotes must match what is listed in the CA request or it will be rejected. Soldiers can add additional corrected custom quotes within the CA request or in "Student Documents"

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located within the ArmyIgnitED account while in the "Pending ACAPO Review" status. If ACAPO reviews it and it does not have a matching quote, it will be rejected.

(5) CA requests for exams or books/materials cannot be split payments. If a Soldier does not have enough funding remaining to pay for a requested exam or books/materials in full, the CA request will be rejected.

(6) If required, Soldiers must request books and materials separately in conjunction with a request for a credentialing course or exam. Requests for only books or materials will be rejected unless there is a current credentialing course or exam in progress or pending payment.

(7) Soldiers are not authorized to prepay for a course or exam using personal funds while a CA request is pending approval. Reimbursement for Soldiers' out-of-pocket expenses is not authorized.

(8) Soldiers may not attend a course or sit for an exam prior to receiving verification from the CA CBO, Army Credentialing and Continuing Education Services for Soldiers, Army University (ACCESS, ArmyU), that the course or exam has been CA funded. If this occurs, Soldiers will be liable for the cost of the course or exam.

(9) Soldiers may request to change the end date of an existing CA requests as long as the requested end date does not exceed one calendar year (365 days) from the start date of the course and there is sufficient time in service remaining to complete it. Requests for extensions of the end date must be submitted via an ArmyIgnitED messaging within ArmyIgnitED to ACAPO using the "Credentialing Assistance (CA) Office" category. Soldiers must ensure the vendor can accommodate the extension. Soldiers will be responsible for any cost associated with the changes in end date required by the vendor.

(10) Soldiers will not be allowed to submit a new CA request if there is a hold on their account for an overdue grade (Pass/Fail) on any CA request. Vendors must upload the grade within 30 days of the end date. If the vendor does not receive the results of the exam (i.e., Pearson Vue, CompTIA, or vendors who provide vouchers for those same exams), it is the Soldier's responsibility to upload the exam results within the ArmyIgnitED CA request.

(11) Soldiers who withdraw from a CA-approved course or exam must do so in ArmyIgnitED. Soldiers must request a "W" from ACAPO using the Credentialing Assistance (CA) Office category. Soldiers must download and digitally complete the CA

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Withdrawal form, DA Form 7793 found in Army pubs. Under no circumstances will the Soldier coordinate a withdrawal directly with the vendor. If this occurs, the Soldier will be liable for any debt incurred.

(a) If the vendor cancels a CA-funded course or exam, the Soldier must submit a message in the ArmyIgnitED system informing ACAPO of the cancellation not later than seven (7) days from the date the Soldier was notified by the vendor of the cancellation. The Soldier will attach a cancellation notice from the vendor.

(b) Soldiers should resolve any ArmyIgnitED-imposed account holds prior to requesting CA. Holds imposed due to incorrect information reported to ArmyIgnitED by third-party systems (e.g., an educational institution or Army personnel system) must be corrected in those systems. Should the placement of an erroneous hold on any ArmyIgnitED account occur, the Soldier should send a message through the ArmyIgnitED system. The Soldier must attach documentation (e.g., orders, Department of the Army (DA) Form 1059 or Joint Services Transcript) that verifies the correct personnel information to have the hold deferred. Personally identifiable information (PII) must be redacted from all documentation. ACAPO cannot defer or remove a Suspension of Favorable Personnel Actions (Flag) Hold for any reason.

10. Credentialing Assistance Recoupment:

a. Soldiers must successfully pass an approved CA-funded credentialing course or exam to avoid the recoupment of CA funds. Failing a course or an exam, withdrawing from a course or an exam with Army cost, failing to attend a course or sit for an exam in the timeframe requested will result in CA recoupment (reimburse the government for the total costs associated to your training or exam and the associated book(s), material(s) and/or fees).

b. If a Soldier is required to reimburse the Army for CA received, the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) will deduct the funds from the Soldier's pay in accordance with current DFAS policies. The Soldier makes his or her recoupment acknowledgement in the ArmyIgnitED system by selecting a payment plan. When DFAS processes the recoupment, DFAS informs the Soldier of the DEBT on the Leave and Earnings Statement (LES).

c. A Soldier may use CA funding to repeat an unsuccessful course or exam, or use CA for a different course or exam once the Soldier selects the repayment plan within their ArmyIgnitED account.

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d. Recoupment Waiver:

(1) ACCESS, ArmyU may grant a recoupment waiver when a Soldier withdraws from or cannot complete a course or exam for reasons clearly beyond the Soldier's control.

(2) Soldiers must initiate a separate DA Form 7793, Request for TA or CA Recoupment Waiver, for each course when a grade of "W" is submitted by ACAPO. This form can be downloaded from the Army Publishing Directorate website (https://armypubs.army.mil/ProductMaps/PubForm/Details.aspx?PUB_ID=1006243) or a copy can be obtained through their Army Education Center. These requests must be submitted in the ArmyIgnitED portal no later than 30 days from the date that ACAPO posts the "W" grade in ArmyIgnitED. The DA Form 7793 will be uploaded as a supporting document in the recoupment waiver request in ArmyIgnitED. The first commander in the Soldier's chain of command exercising the Uniform Code of Military Justice authority must endorse recoupment waiver requests. Soldiers must attach documentation (e.g., orders or proof of hospitalization) substantiating the reason for a waiver request to the form. Redact all PI) from all documentation. ACAPO will approve or reject the waiver.

e. Soldiers may not under any circumstances reimburse a vendor for CA funding to circumvent recoupment action for a dropped or failed course or exam.

f. Soldiers who receive a grade other than a "W" for withdrawing from the course or exam will not be able to submit a request for recoupment waiver for it. Soldiers can only submit requests for recoupment waivers for courses or exams that were successfully withdrawn from in the ArmyIgnitED system.

g. Soldiers agree to reimburse the Army when they receive an unsatisfactory grade for the course or exam. If eligible, Soldiers may repeat an unsuccessful course using CA funds upon initiation of CA recoupment. Soldiers cannot submit a recoupment waiver for unsatisfactory or failing grades.

(1) A CA recoupment is not required when ACAPO approves a waiver request in ArmyIgnitED within 30 days from the date the "W" grade was posted for reasons clearly beyond the Soldier's control, such as emergency leave, reassignment, natural or man-made disaster, illness, hospitalization or unanticipated military missions.

(2) ACAPO will process DA Form 7793 requests by reviewing to ensure it is complete and that the reason for the request is valid. If the DA Form 7793 is incomplete

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or does not provide adequate substantiating documentation, the request for recoupment waiver will be denied and returned to the Soldier with an explanation.

(3) ACAPO will not approve a DA Form 7793 when a grade other than “W” for withdrawal has been posted to ArmyIgnitED.

(4) ACAPO is the approval authority for all DA Form 7793s. ACAPO can disapprove a DA Form 7793 even if a Soldier’s commander recommends approval.

(5) Approved Request for CA Recoupment Waivers may result in the return of unused funds to the Soldier’s ArmyIgnitED account.

11. Military Service Obligation:

a. The service obligation for the CA program has been removed per reference 1a, dated 13 October 2021. This applies to all CA requests submitted and/or completed on or after 13 October 2021. CA request end date in ArmyIgnitED must reflect a date of 13 October 2021 or after.

b. CA requests completed prior to 13 October 2021 must still complete the applicable service obligation incurred at that time; RA, AGR and mobilized commissioned officers (under Title 10 or Title 32 authority) incur an Additional Duty Service Obligation (ADSO) of two years and Reserve Component officers (USAR and ARNG) incur a Reserve Duty Service Obligation (RDSO) of four years. The CA military service obligation commences on the ending date of each course for which CA was approved.

12. Point of Contact for this policy is Sophia Sweeney, Army Credentialing Assistance Program Manager, ACCESS, ArmyU at sophia.a.sweeney.civ@army.mil.

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