



**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**  
THE ARMY UNIVERSITY  
1600 SPEARHEAD DIVISION AVENUE, DEPARTMENT 410  
FORT KNOX, KY 40122-5401

ATZL-AUA

10 September 2020

MEMORANDUM FOR

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

Chief, Army National Guard Education Oversight Branch, National Guard Bureau (ARNG-HRM-E/Mr. Hardy), 111 South George Mason Drive, Arlington, VA 22204-1382

Chief, US Army Reserve Command, G-1, Services and Support Division (AFRC-PRS/CPT Watkins), 4710 Knox Street, Fort Bragg, NC 28310-5000

SUBJECT: Updated Army Credentialing Assistance (CA) Policy

1. References.

a. Department of Defense Instruction 1322.25 (Voluntary Education Programs), 14 March 2011, Incorporating Change 3, Effective 7 July 2014.

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

c. Memorandum, AHRC-PDZ-A, 20 June 2018, Subject: Army Tuition Assistance (TA) Policy Revision Implementation Guidance.

d. Memorandum, ATZL-LD, 01 October 2019, Subject: Army Credentialing Assistance Program Revision Implementation Guidance (Superseded).

e. AR 350-100, Officer Active Duty Service Obligations, 26 September 2017.

f. AR 135-91, Service Obligations, Methods of Fulfillment, Participation Requirements, and Enforcement Provisions, 14 March 2016.

g. AR 600-8-2, Suspension of Favorable Personnel Actions (Flag), 11 May 2016

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

2. Purpose: This policy supersedes all previous Army CA guidance.

3. Applicability: This policy applies to all Regular Army Soldiers, Active Guard Reserve (AGR) Soldiers pursuant to Title 10 and Title 32, United States Army Reserve (USAR),

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and Army National Guard (ARNG) Soldiers in active drilling status with a designation as satisfactory participant.

4. CA Eligibility: The following are in addition to the baseline CA eligibility requirements found in reference 1b:

a. Soldiers must complete specified professional military education, and the required military education level must be reflected in ArmyIgnitED before CA can be approved.

b. Soldiers may use CA upon achieving their Military Occupational Specialty Qualification (MOSQ) as follows:

(1) Enlisted Soldiers who have graduated Advanced Individual Training.

(2) Warrant officers who have graduated Warrant Officer Basic Course.

(3) Officers who have graduated Basic Officer Leaders Course.

5. 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 complete the credentialing course or exam before 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 the Inactive National Guard.

6. CA Authorizations:

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a. Soldiers can pursue any credential found in Army Credentialing Opportunities On-Line (COOL) and may work on multiple credentials simultaneously or sequentially.

b. CA can authorize the payment of classroom, hands-on, online or blended training and courses, materials, manuals, study guides, 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 TA limit.

d. Before receiving CA, the Soldier must sign an electronic Statement of Understanding (SOU) acknowledging compliance with Army CA policies and procedures.

#### 7. 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. CA will not be authorized for any course for which the Soldier receives reimbursement in whole or in part from any other Federal source, including Veterans' education benefits and Service-funded programs (e.g., ROTC scholarship, education-related incentive or bonus, or advanced civil schooling), when the payment would constitute a duplication of benefits.

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

f. CA is not authorized for:

(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.

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(3) Required credentials for an 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.

8. Credentialing Assistance Request Procedures and Timelines:

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

b. Soldiers must submit separate CA requests for each credentialing course or exam to ArmyIgnitED at least 30 business days prior to the start date of the course or exam. The end date of the requested course or exam must be within one calendar year of the start date.

(1) CA requests submitted less than 30 business days prior to the course or exam start date will be rejected.

(2) CA requests submitted less than 30 business days prior to the course or exam start date will not be considered for exception-to-policy CA funding for any reason.

(3) Soldiers must request books and material in conjunction with a request for a credentialing course or exam. Requests for only books or material will be rejected.

(4) 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.

(5) Soldiers may not attend a course or sit for an exam prior to receiving verification from the Finance Division, 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.

(6) Soldiers who wish to change the start or end date of an existing CA request, whether funded or pending funding, must email ACCESS, ArmyU at [usarmy.knox.hrc.mbx.tagd-aces-credentialing-program@mail.mil](mailto:usarmy.knox.hrc.mbx.tagd-aces-credentialing-program@mail.mil) and request the change. ACCESS, ArmyU will approve or deny the change based on the reason for the

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request. The end date of a requested course extension cannot exceed one calendar year from the start date of the course.

(7) Soldiers will not receive approval to use CA for an additional course or exam until the vendor provides the certificate of completion or grade for a completed course or exam.

c. Soldiers who wish to withdraw from a CA-approved course or exam must do so in ArmyIgnitED. 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.

d. If the vendor cancels a CA funded course or exam, the Soldier must email ACCESS, ArmyU at [usarmy.knox.hrc.mbx.tagd-aces-credentialing-program@mail.mil](mailto:usarmy.knox.hrc.mbx.tagd-aces-credentialing-program@mail.mil) not later than five business days from the date the Soldier was notified by the vendor of the cancellation. The Soldier will attach a cancellation notice from the vendor to the email. Upon ACCESS, ArmyU's approval, the Soldier can request CA for an appropriate replacement course or exam (if desired).

e. 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 an email to ACCESS, ArmyU at [usarmy.knox.hrc.mbx.tagd-aces-credentialing-program@mail.mil](mailto:usarmy.knox.hrc.mbx.tagd-aces-credentialing-program@mail.mil). The Soldier must attach documentation (e.g., orders, Department of the Army Form 1059, or Joint Services Transcript) that verifies the correct personnel information to have the hold deferred. Personally identifiable information must be redacted from all documentation. ACCESS, ArmyU cannot defer or remove a Suspension of Favorable Personnel Actions (Flag) Hold for any reason.

#### 9. Credentialing Assistance Recoupment:

a. Soldiers must successfully complete an approved 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 or failing to attend a course or sit for an exam in the timeframe requested will result in CA recoupment.

b. If a Soldier is required to repay 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 will be informed via email by ArmyIgnitED or ACCESS, ArmyU before a collection request is sent to DFAS so that the

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Soldier may dispute the debt. Soldiers can email ACCESS, ArmyU at [usarmy.knox.hrc.mbx.tagd-aces@mail.mil](mailto:usarmy.knox.hrc.mbx.tagd-aces@mail.mil) for assistance with recoupment issues.

c. A Soldier may use CA funding to repeat an unsuccessful course or exam, or use CA for a different course or exam, once ACCESS, ArmyU initiates recoupment for the original course or exam. Additionally the Soldier must receive counseling from an Army Education Counselor that assists the Soldier in determining the reason for the unsuccessful completion and in developing strategies that support the continuing pursuit of credentials. Annotation of the counseling session must be in ArmyIgnitED.

d. Recoupment Waiver.

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

(2) Soldiers can request a CA recoupment waiver by submitting the "CA Recoupment Waiver – Withdrawal for (WM) Military Reasons" form located 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 Personally Identifiable Information (PII) from all documentation.

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.

10. Military Service Obligation:

a. Commissioned officers (CW2, 2LT, and above) may use CA only if the Officer agrees to serve a military service obligation, in accordance with current TA policy requirements. Upon request and approval of CA for credentialing courses and/or materials, Regular Army, AGR, and mobilized commissioned officers (under Title 10 or Title 32 authority), incur an Additional Duty Service Obligation (ADSO) of two years. 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.

b. Officers using CA for only testing or recertification of a credential will not incur a service obligation.

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c. Once imposed, the CA military service obligation will run concurrently with any previously imposed TA or CA military service obligation.

d. Officers may not under any circumstances reimburse a vendor for CA funding to avoid a military service obligation.

11. Point of Contact for this policy is Sophia Sweeney, Army Credentialing Assistance Program Manager, ACCESS, ArmyU at [sophia.a.sweeney.civ@mail.mil](mailto:sophia.a.sweeney.civ@mail.mil).

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