



UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS  
MARINE CORPS RECRUIT DEPOT/EASTERN RECRUITING REGION  
PO BOX 19001  
PARRIS ISLAND, SOUTH CAROLINA 29905-9001

DepO 1560.5E  
MCCS

DEC 13 2019

DEPOT ORDER 1560.5E

From: Commanding General  
To: Distribution List

Subj: DEPOT VOLUNTARY EDUCATION PROGRAM (SHORT TITLE: VOLED PROGRAM)

Ref: (a) 38 U.S.C. Chapter 30  
(b) DoD Instruction 1322.25, "Voluntary Education Programs," March 15, 2011, as amended  
(c) MCO 1130.53R  
(d) DANTES Examination Program Handbook (DEPH)  
(e) AR 601-222, "Armed Services Military Personnel Accession Testing Programs," October 17, 2005  
(f) 5 U.S.C. 552a  
(g) SECNAVINST 5211.5E  
(h) SECNAV M-5210-1  
(i) MCO 5210.11F  
(j) MCO 1560.25  
(k) MCO 1560.28B

Encl: (1) Depot Voluntary Education Program Guidance

1. Situation. This Order publishes policies and standards on the Voluntary Education (VolEd) Program per references (a) through (k). Chapters and appendices are included to provide guidance and technical assistance to the Director, Marine Corps Community Services (MCCS) in order to execute the VolEd Program.

2. Cancellation. DepO 1560.5D

3. Mission

a. The VolEd Program provides personal and professional learning opportunities to the Marine Corps community supporting recruitment, retention, and readiness of all Marines aboard Marine Corps Recruit Depot, Parris Island (MCRD PI).

b. The VolEd Program provides multiple learning opportunities in a consolidated center, if facilities are available, or the use of technology to independent duty and deployed Marines.

4. Execution

a. Commander's Intent and Concept of Operations

(1) Commander's Intent. To fulfill the VolEd needs of the MCRD PI community per references (a) through (k).

(2) Concept of Operations. Unit Commanders are responsible for effectively implementing the policies and standards outlined in this Order. The Depot VolEd staff will support unit education officers in the

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facilitation of their education duties. Appendix A of the enclosure lists commonly used VolEd definitions.

(a) Ensure members separating at the completion of their active service obligation receive individual counseling pertinent to their eligibility for educational benefits, and per reference (a), the procedures for, and advantages of, affiliating with the Selected Marine Corps Reserve is completed no less than six months prior to expiration of End of Active Service (EAS). This counseling is in addition to information provided at separation. Use the following sample entry:

"Date: Counseled this date concerning my educational benefits under the MGIB and the procedures for and advantages of affiliating with the SMCR after separation from active service."

(b) Provide separating Marines a certified copy of their DD 2366.

b. Subordinate Element Missions

(1) Director, M CCS

(a) Plan, develop, and execute a comprehensive, VolEd Program responsive to the needs of the Depot community.

(b) Ensure the Depot VolEd Program includes, at a minimum, high school through graduate level education programs. Tuition Assistance (TA) services, testing (including Defense Activity For Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES) and military classification testing, (e.g., Armed Forces Classification Test, Defense Language Aptitude Battery, and Defense Language Proficiency Test), distance learning, United Services Military Apprenticeship Program (USMAP), and an academic skills program which may include Online Academic Skills Course (OASC), College Placement Skills Training (CPST) or locally provided academic skills training. The Director shall:

1. Appoint in writing an Education Service Officer (ESO) as a primary billet. The ESO shall have at least a bachelor's degree in education or a related field.

2. High school completion programs shall be available at no cost for active duty members and their dependents.

3. Academic skills programs shall be available at no cost for service members. Academic skills information will be provided via the Marine for Life Cycle, Personal Readiness Seminar, and Your Readiness Course available via Marine Net.

4. Utilize VolEd Program assessments to determine the interest of the installation community. This program assessment, provided by the Deputy Commandant, Manpower and Reserve Affairs - Marine and Family Programs (DC M&RA (MF)) or conducted locally, shall be conducted minimally every three years.

5. Select providers to deliver VolEd Program services per the guidance contained in reference (b).

(c) Ensure all educational institutions granted access to Marine Corps installations/activities have a Department of Defense (DoD) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in good standing and comply with all requirements outlined in reference (b). Include in planning, programming, and budgeting efforts to provide for:

1. A single facility, where available, as the primary VolEd Program center to serve as the focal point for the VolEd Program, activities, and information.

2. Supplies, equipment, internet access, classroom furniture, and travel for permanent personnel.

3. Life cycle maintenance for equipment and furniture.

(d) Ensure VolEd staff collect and report program usage, patron activity, and staffing data as required by DC M&RA (MF).

(e) Ensure installation ESO initiate and maintain liaison with the nearest Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) office. The installation ESO shall:

1. Maintain a current file of DVA information and materials relating to DVA administered educational assistance benefits.

2. Disseminate all DVA information to subordinate and tenant commands.

3. Refer Marines desiring VA vocational or educational counseling to the nearest DVA office.

(f) Ensure the VolEd Program is a mandatory Depot check-in/out item.

(g) Ensure time is allotted during settling in services for the introduction of the Depot VolEd Program.

(h) Recognize individual VolEd Program achievement through ceremonial presentations and graduations, appropriate correspondence, and certificates.

(i) Ensure a program for continuing professional development is provided to maintain required skills and qualifications for all VolEd Program personnel. Professional development shall include annual training opportunities. Ensure VolEd staff obtain and maintain, within 2 years of employment, HQMC (MF) approved professional development certification.

(j) Ensure all personnel assigned to VolEd Program billets or otherwise involved in the conduct of the VolEd Program adhere to the standards of conduct set forth in the Joint Ethics Regulations.

(k) Ensure Depot ESO provides educational guidance and counseling as follows:

1. Provide educational counseling and guidance to all active duty personnel at the first permanent duty station, at each new duty station,

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prior to separation, and at other suitable action point intervals during their Marine Corps Life Cycle.

2. Ensure Test Control Officers (TCO) and test centers comply with the guidance and procedures published in the DANTES Examination Program Handbook, reference (d).

3. Assist VolEd Program participants in preparation of education plans.

4. Establish and maintain external partnerships with local and state civilian education professionals.

(2) Commanding Officer, Recruit Training Regiment, (RTR)

(a) Ensure, within the first 14 days of recruit reception, active duty recruits are instructed in the provisions of the Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB) and are given the opportunity to elect participation in the MGIB. Make a unit diary entry for each recruit within the first 14 days, indicating their MGIB election or declination.

(b) All active duty recruits shall complete a DD 2366, "Montgomery GI Bill Act of 1984 (MGIB)" indicating their election or declination to participate in the MGIB. This form shall be made a part of the Recruit's Service Record Book (SRB) with a copy being forwarded to Manpower Management Support Branch (MMSB) for inclusion in the recruit's Official Military Personnel File (OMPF). No corrections permitted on DD 2366 once placed in OMPF. If corrections are necessary, a new form must be used. Forms can be download from [http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives form/index.htm](http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/form/index.htm).

(c) Assign sufficient, qualified personnel to conduct the VolEd Program per the directions and guidelines outlined in this Order.

(d) Appoint in writing a Unit Education Officer as a collateral duty. The Unit Education Officer shall possess at least a bachelor's degree.

(e) Identify enlisted Marines who do not possess a high school credential and Marine Corps Officers who do not possess a baccalaureate degree. Provide these Marines with information and referral services regarding high school and degree completion resources.

(f) Counsel enlisted first-term Marines on the availability of academic skills training such as OASC, CPST, or MASP.

(g) Publicize and promote the opportunities available through the VolEd Program, using a variety of appropriate media.

(h) Provide counseling to first-term Marines on the availability of academic skills program (online or locally provided).

(3) Commanding Officer, Headquarters and Service Battalion

(a) Assign sufficient, qualified personnel to conduct the VolEd Program per the directions and guidelines outlined in this Order.

(b) Appoint in writing a Unit Education Officer as a collateral duty. The Unit Education Officer shall possess at least a bachelor's degree.

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(c) Identify enlisted Marines who do not possess a high school credential and Marine Corps officers who do not possess a baccalaureate degree. Provide these Marines with information and referral services regarding high school and degree completion resources.

(d) Counsel enlisted first-term Marines on the availability of academic skills training such as OASC, CPST, or MASP.

(e) Publicize and promote the opportunities available through the VolEd Program, using a variety of appropriate media.

(f) Provide counseling to first-term Marines on the availability of academic skills program (online or locally provided).

(4) Commanding Officer, Weapons Field Training Battalion

(a) Assign sufficient, qualified personnel to conduct the VolEd Program per the directions and guidelines outlined in this Order.

(b) Appoint in writing a Unit Education Officer as a collateral duty. The Unit Education Officer shall possess at least a bachelor's degree.

(c) Identify enlisted Marines who do not possess a high school credential and Marine Corps officers who do not possess a baccalaureate degree. Provide these Marines with information and referral services regarding high school and degree completion resources.

(d) Counsel enlisted first-term Marines on the availability of academic skills training such as OASC, CPST, or MASP.

(e) Publicize and promote the opportunities available through the VolEd Program, using a variety of appropriate media.

(f) Provide counseling to first-term Marines on the availability of academic skills program (online or locally provided).

(5) Installation Access. All Institutions of Higher Learning requesting access to MCRD PI for the sole purpose of providing counseling or student support services are expected to adhere to the installation access requirements per reference (b). Educational institution representatives must meet the appropriate requirements of federal law, DoD Instruction 1322.25 with Change 3, the policies set forth in the DoD Voluntary Education Partnership MOU, and any other additional local guidance from the Depot Security Manager.

(6) Academic Institutions Providing Classes on the Depot. All Institutions of Higher Learning providing on-base education services must have a local MOU in addition to the requirements listed in reference (b).

(7) DoD Voluntary Education Partnership MOU. The DoD Voluntary Education Partnership MOU (which includes the service-specific addendums) is required for an institution to participate in the DoD Tuition Assistance (TA) Program. An Installation MOU with an institution is required only when an institution is operating on a military installation. Additionally, the MOU:

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1. Must contain the installation-unique requirements that the Depot's ESO coordinated and documented; is approved by the appropriate service voluntary education representative; and is presented to the installation commander for final approval.

2. Cannot conflict with the DoD Voluntary Education Partnership MOU and governing regulations.

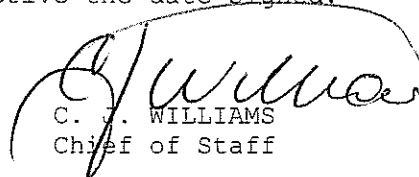
(8) Program. Draft, implement, refine, and successfully deliver complete academic programs (e.g., degree/certificate programs) and courses aboard MCRD PI with the parameters of the MOU. The institution has a sole responsibility for the development of instructional materials, classroom presentation, course related testing, class records, recording of attendance, related instructional activities and awarding of degrees, in accordance with the terms of the MOU. Additional requirements may be outlined in the Installation MOU as required by the Marine Corps Installation Commander.

5. Administration and Logistics. Recommendations concerning the contents of this Order may be forwarded to Director, MCCS via the appropriate chain-of-command.

9. Command and Signal

a. Command. This Order is applicable to all Marines, Sailors, and civilians.

b. Signal. This Order is effective the date signed.

  
C. J. WILLIAMS  
Chief of Staff

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Chapter 1

DANTES

1. Background. DANTES, a DoD agency, helps service members and veterans pursue their educational goals and earn degrees or certifications both during and after service. DANTES provides leadership and support for this important effort through partnerships across the education community. DANTES provides consolidated management of contracts and programs to prevent duplication of effort among the Services. DANTES administers and coordinates the following programs for DoD:

- a. High school equivalency tests.
- b. Tests for college credit.
- c. Undergraduate admissions tests.
- d. Graduate admissions tests.
- e. Certifications.
- f. Interest assessments.

2. DANTES Examination Program

a. Personnel Requirements

(1) Per reference (e), only authorized personnel access DANTES-sponsored examinations. Authorized personnel consist of DANTES-appointed Test Control Officers (TCOs), Alternative Test Control Officers (ATCOs), Interim Test Control Officers (ITCOs), and Prospective Test Control Officers (PTCOs).

(2) All TCOs, ATCO ATCOs ITCO's, and PTCOs, must receive written confirmation of their appointments from DANTES before beginning associated duties.

(3) Commissioned Officers, Chief Warrant Officers, Staff Noncommissioned Officers (SNCOs), Federal employees, and contractors employed and monitored by the Marine Corps may be appointed as DANTES TCOs, ATCOs, ITCOs, and PTCOs if they meet the qualifications outlined in reference (e).

(4) Active Duty Sergeants may be appointed as ATCOs with a waiver from DC M&RA (MF) and DANTES.

b. Eligibility Requirements

(1) The examinations offered through the DANTES Examination Program are available to Active Duty and Reserve Components of the Marine Corps. Many examinations are free of charge for Active Duty service members.

(2) Military spouses and family members may be eligible to take certain examinations on a non-funded basis, per reference (e). Restrictions vary with each examination and between CONUS and OCONUS testing centers. If a service member is the spouse of an Examiner and wishes to test, the TCO should contact the DANTES Exams Program to arrange for any required testing.



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(3) TCOs, ATCOs, ITCOs, PTCOs, Test examiners, and their family members are not eligible for examinations offered through DANTES until six months following the expiration of their appointments.

(4) Waivers of the above policy will be handled on an individual basis. Waivers must be requested in writing and submitted to DANTES, per reference (e).

c. DANTES Examination Program Guidance

(1) DANTES maintains all test instructions in the online DANTES Academic Information Management System.

(2) Official testing policies and procedures are provided in the guide for DANTES Sponsored Examination Programs, available online via the TCO Portal.

(3) DANTES Testing Centers

(a) A DANTES testing center is a facility established by a military service, on a military installation, to administer the DANTES Examination Program.

(b) DC M&RA (MF) is the Marine Corps installation authority for the establishment/disestablishment of DANTES testing centers.

(c) Each DANTES test center shall submit a quarterly exam inventory report, per reference (e).

(4) Security

(a) The appointed TCO has the full responsibility for the security and administration of the DANTES Examination Program as specified in reference (e).

(b) In the event a DANTES examination or any of its component parts is lost or otherwise placed in danger of compromise, the TCO shall:

1. Suspend all testing on the jeopardized test, per reference (e).

2. Immediately notify DC M&RA (MF) and DANTES of the loss or compromise by the fastest means available. The notification message should include how and when the test was lost or compromised, the form and serial number(s) of the test booklet(s), a statement about testing suspension on the jeopardized test(s), and that the compromised test(s) have been impounded.

3. The Commander of the installation or Marine Corps activity shall appoint an officer to conduct an investigation into the circumstances surrounding the compromise of a DANTES examination, per reference (e). The TCO shall provide the name and commercial phone number of the Investigation Officer to DC M&RA (MF) and DANTES within two days of the discovery of the loss. Within 30 days the Command shall report the findings of the investigation to DC M&RA (MF). The report shall include the reason for loss/compromise, details of the loss/compromise, conclusions of the

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investigation, and recommendations for corrective action to prevent recurrence.

4. Testing may resume only when authorized by DC M&RA (MF).

(c) In the event of improper test conduct, the TCO shall follow the procedures contained in reference (e) and immediately contact DC M&RA (MF).

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## Chapter 2

Tuition Assistance1. Background

a. TA is intended to encourage Marines to voluntarily attend courses delivered by accredited civilian educational institutions on campus, on military installations, or through distance learning during off-duty time. TA usage is not authorized for personnel assigned to Permissive Temporary Active Duty.

b. DC M&RA (MF) centrally manages TA funding for the Marine Corps with support from the Naval Education and Training for Professional Development Center (NETPDC). TA funding is discretionary and subject to funds availability.

c. Navy Education and Training for Professional Development Center (NETPDC) manages the Navy College Management Information System (NCMIS), an automated web-based TA management system utilized by command education officers and installation VolEd Program staff to authorize TA for eligible personnel. In addition, NETPDC processes TA invoices, records grades, and initiates TA recoupment when required. The Installation VolEd Program ESO, or their designee, serves as the local TA fund approving authority.

d. In accordance with reference (c), the Marine Corps will not exceed the maximum semester hour and fiscal year (FY) individual TA authorization amounts, as reviewed and agreed to or modified annually by all services.

2. Tuition Assistance Policy

a. TA is authorized for off-duty studies offered by institutions whose accrediting bodies are recognized by the Department of Education and who have signed a DoD MOU.

b. TA will fund authorized courses prior to the start of each term regardless of the length of the coursework. The maximum amount of time allowed to complete any course is 12 months. All coursework must be completed while the Marine is on active duty. Enlisted Marines must complete all coursework no later than 60 days prior to End of Active Service (EAS). Officers must serve two years beyond the date of completion of coursework to avoid repaying TA funds.

c. Annual updates to TA eligibility requirements will be promulgated via MARADMIN.

d. Marines whose TA funded undergraduate level coursework results in a grade point average (GPA) below 2.0 are not eligible for TA until a GPA of 2.0 or better is achieved through non-TA funded course work. Courses that are recouped or paid back by the Marine will not be included in the GPA calculation. First time TA users who receive a grade of D or F in their first course will be authorized TA for no more than 15 semester hours, or equivalent in order to establish a GPA.

e. Marines whose TA funded graduate level coursework results in a GPA below 3.0 are not eligible for TA until a GPA of 3.0 or better is achieved

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through non-TA funded course work. Courses that are recouped or paid back by the Marine will not be included in the GPA calculation.

f. One change in a program of study is permitted prior to completion of 75% of the program. TA funding will be provided only for the original degree plan if a change is made after completion of 75% of the program.

g. The use of TA for non-degree oriented language courses is limited to those published by the Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness on the DoD Strategic Language List. These non-degree funded classes will not count toward the TA credit limit for earning a degree.

h. The Tuition Assistance Application (NETPDC 1560/3) is authorized as a TA request document. It is not authorized for use as a funding document.

i. Requirement for prior approval supersedes all institution enrollment and payment policies. Administrative errors made by the Education Centers for retroactive TA will be taken into consideration for approval only by DC M&RA (MF).

j. Individual TA participants are required to

(1) Submit a completed NETPDC 1560/3 request for TA through the web-based portal of NCMIS to their local installation education center, via their Commanding Officer. The requestor's signature authorizes the educational institution to provide grades electronically to NETPDC TA ACCOUNTING, Code N8115, 6490 Saufley Field Road, Pensacola, FL 32509-5241 within 30 days of the completion date of the course; however, final responsibility for ensuring grades are received by NETPDC remains with the Marine.

(2) Immediately notify the local ESO of:

(a) Changes in enrollment

(b) Decision not to enroll

(c) Withdrawal

1. Involuntary withdrawal due to changes in work schedule, deployment, Temporary Active Duty (TAD), hospitalization, etc., is a basis for exception to the recoupment of TA, if validated in writing by the Marine's immediate commander and approved by the ESO.

2. Voluntary withdrawal resulting in TA charges to the Marine Corps shall be recouped from the individual.

(3) Reimburse the U.S. Treasury for unsuccessfully completed courses as defined in reference (a), incomplete courses, or courses from which the Service Member voluntarily withdrew.

k. Course Extensions. Extensions granted by an academic institution do not constitute an automatic TA extension. For a six month TA extension to be authorized, an "I" grade must be posted in the TA system. The end date for a TA extension period will not extend beyond six months from the original course end date or beyond 60 days prior to the Marine's active duty service period for enlisted Marines and two years prior to the Marine's end of active duty service period for officers. TA funds for courses with "I" grades not

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converted to passing grades are subject to recoupment from the Marine. Marines may only be granted one extension per course.

l. TA for Marines on Inspector-Instructor duty shall be processed or approved by Commander, MARFORRES.

m. Officer Obligation. Commissioned Officers, including Warrant Officers, must agree to remain on active duty for two continuous years after completing TA funded course(s). If a commissioned officer retires, voluntarily separates or is separated due to misconduct from active duty service, the individual shall reimburse the Marine Corps an amount proportionate to the amount of un-served duty. This agreement does not obligate the Marine Corps to retain the individual on active duty. An officer with an approved retirement date, or who will reach service limitation within the two year window, will not be authorized TA.

(1) Officers who are involuntarily separated from active duty, excluding those separated for misconduct, are exempt from the mandatory payback of TA. The officer must receive a qualifying involuntary separation program designator.

(2) Recoupment of TA does not obligate the Marine Corps to release a Marine from active duty if the period of obligated service has not been completed.

n. Deployed Education. Installations may establish standard operating procedures with academic institutions that are approved to deliver undergraduate level courses aboard ships. Class sessions will be scheduled according to operational tempo.

(1) All classes must be approved and scheduled prior to the deployment.

(2) All TA for shipboard courses must be approved prior to deployment.

### 3. Eligibility

a. Active duty Marine Corps personnel and active duty Marine Corps Reserve personnel (Active Reserve, Extended Active Duty and Mobilized Reserves) are eligible for Marine Corps TA if they meet the following eligibility requirements:

(1) TA funds are not authorized for enlisted Marines when courses end less than 60 days prior to the Service Member's EAS.

(2) Reserve Marine officers on activation/active duty orders must have an EAS of two years beyond the completion date of the class in order to be approved.

(3) Enlisted Reserve Marines on active duty on activation/active orders must have an EAS no less than 60 days beyond the completion date of the class in order to be approved.

(4) Marines participating in special education programs including, but not limited to the Enlisted Commissioning Education Program, College

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Degree Program, Advanced Degree Program and the SNCO Degree Completion Program are ineligible for TA.

(5) Marines awaiting the disability evaluation of a Medical Evaluation Board, Temporary Limited Duty Board or the final determination of a Physical Evaluation Board are eligible for TA. If the Board approves the Marine's separation prior to the completion of their class, a waiver can be submitted to DC M&RA (MF).

(6) First time active duty TA applicants shall have a minimum time in service of 24 months from their armed forces active duty base date.

(7) Marines must be eligible for promotion.

(8) Marines who have been awarded non-judicial punishment or convicted by a court-martial in the previous 12 months shall not be authorized TA. TA is not authorized for personnel awarded punitive discharge, in confinement, on appellate leave, awaiting a general discharge or an administrative separation under other than honorable conditions. TA is not authorized for service members convicted by foreign or domestic courts, serving sentences in foreign or domestic prisons, or pending administrative discharge in lieu of a trial or court-martial.

(9) TA will not be authorized for military occupational specialty (MOS) required training. Marines assigned to MOS school or residential professional military education (e.g., Expeditionary Warfare School, Command and Staff College, War College, Corporals Course, Sergeants Course, Career Course, etc.) are not authorized receipt of TA until they return to regular or permanent duty.

(10) Prior to TA approval, first time TA applicants must complete the most current version of the Marine Corps Institute course on Personal Financial Management (Course ID MCIZ3420Z) at time of publication of this MCO, and designated for all Marines available via Marine Net, and complete the Higher Education Preparation Course (available through Joint Knowledge Online).

(11) First-time TA users with a General Technical (GT) score of less than 100 shall be required to take the TABE and earn a score of at least 10.2. TABE scores below 10.2 require the Marine to complete the OASC with a minimum score of 70%, or a comparable installation-specific academic skills program prior to receiving TA. The ESO will approve only one course, up to 4 credit hours, regardless of term length, for the first 3 academic terms of TA funded coursework for Marines who do not have access to TABE, who score below acceptable limits or do not have access to OASC, until they have successfully completed 12 semester or hours or equivalent of credit.

b. Commanding officers, or designated representative, are responsible for TA command approval. TA is contingent upon the command's anticipated mission requirements and commanding officer's determination the Marine has met all eligibility requirements. Commanding officers must ensure Marines meet the eligibility requirements in subparagraph 2(a) of this Chapter.

c. TA authorization is contingent upon responsible stewardship of available funds by the installation's ESO and VolEd support personnel. The ESO retains the discretion to treat each TA application solely on the merits of the individual case. The ESO must apply the MCO requirements in making

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such determinations. The following Marine Corps internal control procedures are established to assist the ESO in the TA approval process:

(1) TA shall be authorized for first-time TA applicants for only one course, unless documentation is provided that the Marine has an associate's degree or higher or at least sixty (60) academic credits and a minimum grade point average (GPA) of 2.5.

(2) Marines may not actively participate in more than two TA-funded classes simultaneously.

(3) TA funds for approved involuntary withdrawal waivers, voluntary withdrawals and failed courses will count toward the individual FY ceilings.

(4) TA shall be authorized for only one course in the succeeding academic term in the event that a "D" or below is earned in any undergraduate course or "C" or below is earned in any graduate course during the previously enrolled term utilizing TA, or a voluntary withdrawal occurs from any course that occurred during the previously enrolled term.

(5) TA shall not be approved retroactively. TA applications must be submitted and command approved prior to the requested course start date. Coursework with a start date between 15 and 30 September must be command approved by 12 September or the last working day prior to 12 September.

(6) TA shall not be authorized for duplicate degrees (e.g., second associate or bachelor degree) or double majors.

(7) Open issues in a Marine's TA account, including incomplete courses, reimbursement issues, and waivers, must be resolved and posted to the student record prior to approval of future TA requests.

(8) TA cannot be utilized for fees related to certifications, license exams, or credentials.

(9) Marines attending vocational/technical (Vo-Tech) certificate programs with more than one class or module will only be approved for one class or module at a time.

(10) The number of semester hours or equivalent which can be funded by TA toward a degree is limited to 75 semester hours or equivalent for an associate degree, 150 semester hours or equivalent toward a bachelor degree, and 45 semester hours or equivalent toward a master's degree. Marines who have used the maximum number of hours at each level on the date of this order will not be authorized additional TA.

(11) All TA applicants are required to have a degree plan from their academic institution uploaded to Navy College Management Information System (NCMIS) after completing 6 semester hours of TA funded courses prior to the approval of additional TA. The degree plan must be issued by the institution to the Marine, and include the status of any transfer and/or joint service transcript credits. This requirement pertains to all degrees and certificate programs.

(12) Marines using TA must maintain a cumulative Grade Point Average of 2.0 or higher after completing 15 semester hours, or equivalent, in undergraduate studies, or a GPA of 3.0 or higher after completing 6 semester

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hours, or equivalent, in graduate studies, on a 4.0 scale. If the GPA for a TA funded course falls below these minimum GPA limits, TA will not be authorized and Marines will use alternative funding to enroll in courses to raise the cumulative GPA to 2.0 for undergraduate studies or 3.0 for graduate studies.

(13) TA is not authorized for graduate studies beyond the master's degree level.

(14) TA application must be approved 5 days prior to the start date of the class. Applications will not be accepted if within the 5 day window. TA request may be submitted within 60 days of the start date of the class, request received beforehand will not be considered.

d. TA eligibility will be reviewed annually. Changes to TA eligibility will be published via MARADMIN or updates to this Order.

4. Funding Provisions and Restrictions. The authority to expend funds for the TA Program is derived from the recurring provisions of the annual DoD Appropriations Act. The provisions and restrictions are as follows:

a. Authorized rates are subject to change via the annual rate announcements published by OSD in accordance with reference (a). TA is authorized for tuition only. Marines are responsible for all required fees books, computers, tools, or other tangible items. Costs that exceed what is authorized by TA shall be the Marine's responsibility.

b. The Marine Corps annual TA funding budget may be divided into fiscal quarters. Once the quarterly funds are exhausted, TA approvals will be deferred until the following quarter and prioritized on a first-come first-served basis.

c. TA shall not be authorized for any course for which a Marine is receiving reimbursement in whole or in part under any other provision of law where the payment would constitute a duplication of benefits from the U.S. Treasury. The Top-Up program through the Veterans Educational Assistance Benefits is the only exception. Marines eligible for the MGIB or Post 9/11 GI Bill may use their Top-Up benefit to offset tuition and fees not covered by TA. All first time Top-Up applicants must apply to the VA using VA Form 22-1990 to determine eligibility for Top-Up benefits.

d. Pell Grants may be used in conjunction with TA and are not considered a duplication of benefits from the U.S. Treasury.

e. Marines must earn a grade of "C" or higher, or "P" for passing all non-graduate level coursework, and "B" or higher for graduate level courses to be considered a passing grade. TA funds will be recouped from Marines for failed courses, unresolved Incompletes (I), or courses from which the Marine voluntarily withdrew, resulting in a "W" grade. Recoupment for withdrawals related to duty, medical or emergency circumstances may be waived. The Marine must submit a waiver request with command endorsement to the installation ESO and include supporting documentation such as temporary additional duty (TAD) or permanent change of station orders and a descriptive narrative. Marines shall not submit waiver requests directly to the NETPDTC. ESOs will determine if justification for a waiver is warranted. The amount to be recouped may be reduced by any unearned funds received from the school



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as required by the DoD MOU. Recoupment for undergraduate grades of "D" and graduate grades of "C" and below will not be waived.

#### 5. Funding Criteria

a. TA funds are subject to funding availability and are authorized for study towards a diploma, academic or Vo-Tech certificate, or degree at an academic level higher than that currently held by the Marine. However, enlisted Marines can obtain one certificate from a regional or nationally accredited institution solely at the undergraduate level, regardless of credentials currently held. The certificate program must not be a noncredit course or training program. TA is not authorized for continuing education or workforce development courses. Service Members are responsible for that portion of tuition which is not funded, and for all other costs such as books, materials, transcripts, graduation, etc., regardless of the level of study. The hierarchy of academic levels is defined as high school equivalency, Vo-Tech, associates, baccalaureate, and masters. Lateral Degrees, those on the same level of the hierarchy, shall not be funded. TA may only be authorized for one program of study at a time. For Marines enrolled into a program that has a major and minor, TA will only fund the major and the Marine will be responsible for funding the minor.

b. High School. Tuition for study leading to a valid high school credential shall be fully funded (100 percent).

c. Preparatory Courses. TA is not authorized for preparatory courses such as SAT preparation, Graduate Record Examination preparation, Armed Forces Vocational Aptitude Battery preparation or other courses that are test preparation in nature.

d. Developmental. Developmental courses are funded as long as the accredited institution awards college credit for these courses, even if the institution will not count the credit towards program completion.

e. Vocational-Technical (Vo-Tech). Tuition for courses leading to an applicable Vo-Tech certificate shall be funded at 100 percent of the cost of tuition, not to exceed the DoD maximum per clock, quarter or semester hours and up to the (FY) maximum per individual established annually by DC M&RA (MF). The programs must meet the following requirements:

(1) Vo-Tech certificate programs must be accredited by an accrediting body recognized by the Department of Education, the program must be a VA approved program, and be offered by a school with a signed DoD MOU.

(2) Third party Vo-Tech certificate programs offered at colleges and universities must have the same accreditation or an accreditation recognized by the Department of Education. Third party Vo-Tech program cannot be noncredit, preparatory courses, or training programs. The student transcript must be provided by the college or university and cannot be from the third party affiliate.

(3) Officers are not authorized to use TA for Vo-Tech certificate programs that are not part of a degree program.

f. TA funds are not authorized for continuing education units, preparatory courses, noncredit programs, or pre-requisites that does not count as credit toward the degree.

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g. Undergraduate. One hundred percent of tuition costs, not to exceed the DoD cap per semester hour equivalent for undergraduate study shall be funded up to the annual per capita ceiling established by DoD.

(1) Undergraduate level study is defined as courses leading to an associate or baccalaureate degree.

(2) If a baccalaureate degree is officially conferred during the FY, the student is eligible for TA funds for graduate study. All TA funds already expended during the FY shall be counted towards the graduate level funding maximum.

h. Graduate. One hundred percent of tuition costs, not to exceed the DoD cap per semester hour equivalent for graduate study shall be funded up to annual per capita ceiling established annually by DoD. Graduate level study refers to study leading to a master's degree. TA will fund only one graduate degree.

#### 6. Fiscal Guidance on TA Funds

a. Funds to administer the TA Program are appropriated annually by DC M&RA (MF) and shall be available to fund-approving authorities through NETPDTC, the centrally managed TA authority.

b. When funds are allocated, the DC M&RA (MF) shall provide NETPDTC with a funding ceiling which limits obligation authority.

c. Individual limits of TA are defined by reference (a) and are not subject to waiver.

d. The authorization date of TA determines the chargeable FY appropriation. A course beginning in one FY and ending in the next FY will be charged to the FY in which the course commenced.

e. On a monthly basis, ESOs will notify NCMIS of all uncommitted pending requests. Uncommitted requests will be purged from NCMIS. Additionally, DC M&RA (MF) will provide ESOs with a list of Marines identified for recoupment of TA due to missing grades or unsuccessful completion of TA funded coursework. ESOs will contact identified Marines.

f. Following the completion of the TA funded course(s), grades must be received by NETPDC. If grades are not received:

(1) 45 days after course completion a grade request letter is issued by NETPDTC to the Marine at the unit address in the MCTFS.

(2) 30 days following the grade request letter a TA indebtedness resolution letter is issued to the Marine by NETPDTC via the Commanding Officer.

(3) 30 days following the TA indebtedness resolution letter, a DD 139, "Pay Adjustment Authorization" is initiated. The DD 139 is initiated by NETPDTC and requires no action on the part of the ESO or the local disbursing office.

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(4) Unsuccessful course completion as defined in reference (a) will not generate a grade request letter. Marines who do not successfully complete a TA funded course will be issued a TA letter of indebtedness for recoupment of TA funds. If a student receives a withdrawal or failure, the process starts with a letter of indebtedness since a withdrawal or failure is posted as the recoupment grade.

(5) Marines who receive a grade of incomplete have a maximum of six months after the original course completion date to successfully complete the course as defined in reference (a) before recoupment action is initiated.

## 7. Administration

a. Installation ESOs will develop via the MCCS marketing department a thorough marketing plan that may include coordination with Public Affairs Offices, Career Planners, and local commands. The plan should ensure that all eligible Marines are aware of available voluntary education opportunities. Marketing materials should be devoid of bias and prejudice.

b. Approval is contingent upon the unit's anticipated mission requirements and the Commanding Officer's concurrence that the Marine can meaningfully participate. Attention to command schedule commitments that might preclude successful course completion is vital to the success of the TA program. Local Commanders will ensure that the information regarding the availability of TA is disseminated to all Marines, and will monitor the implementation of the TA program per the policies set forth in this Order.

c. Commands should coordinate with installation Voluntary Education Centers well in advance of scheduled deployments to assist deploying Marines who desire to pursue Voluntary Education opportunities.

(1) Marines deployed to other Marine Corps Installations are eligible for educational services through the Education Center at either the installation from or to which they are deployed.

(3) TA for Marines assigned to duty at non-Marine Corps installations or other remote locations east of the Mississippi River, is processed by either Marine Corps Base (MCB) Camp Lejeune or Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Cherry Point.

(3) TA for Marines assigned to duty at non-Marine Corps installations or other remote locations west of the Mississippi River, is processed by either MCB Camp Pendleton or MCAS Miramar.

(4) TA for Marines on Recruiting Duty is processed at two locations:

(a) Recruiting staff west of the Mississippi River should contact the MCRD San Diego Education Center.

(b) Recruiting staff east of the Mississippi River should contact the MCRD PI Education Center.

(5) TA for Marines on Inspector-Instructor Duty is processed at MARFORRES.

(6) TA for Marines stationed in Guam is processed by the MCB Hawaii Education Center.

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## Appendix A

Definitions

1. American Council on Education. The major coordinating body for all the nation's higher education institutions.
2. Off-Duty Time. Time when the Service Member is not scheduled to perform official duties.
3. Naval Education and Training Professional Development Center (NETPDC). Provides products and services that enable and enhance education, training, career development, and personnel advancement throughout the Navy. Primary elements of the command include the Voluntary Education Department, the Navy Advancement Center and the Resources Management Department.
4. Navy College Management Information System (NCMIS). NCMIS is the centrally managed education information system used by Department of the Navy education personnel to maintain automated voluntary education records and authorize tuition assistance.
5. The Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES). An educational service organization that supports the VolEd Programs of the military services by providing examination and independent study programs. DANTES also provides a transcript service for United States Armed Forces Institute (USAFI) courses and examinations completed before July 1974.
6. Tuition Assistance (TA). As defined by reference (b), funds provided by the military services for the payment of a specified portion of the tuition costs for eligible military personnel participating in authorized courses offered during off-duty hours.

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## Appendix B

Abbreviations and Acronyms

1. ATCO.....Alternative Test Control Officers
2. CO.....Commanding Officer
3. CONUS.....Continental United States
4. CPST.....College Placement Skills Training
5. DANTES.....Defense Activity for Non-Traditional  
Education Support
6. DC M&RA.....Deputy Commandant Manpower and Reserve  
Affairs
7. DoD.....Department of Defense
8. ESO.....Education Services Officer
9. GPA.....Grade Point Average
10. GT.....General Technical
11. ITCO.....Interim Test Control Officer
12. MARFORCOM.....Marine Corps Forces Command
13. MARFORPAC.....Marine Corps Forces Pacific
14. MARFORRES.....Marine Corps Forces Reserve
15. MCB.....Marine Corps Base
16. MCCS.....Marine Corps Community Services
17. MCTFS.....Marine Corps Total Force System
18. MF.....Marine and Family Programs Division
19. MGIB.....Montgomery GI Bill
20. MMSB.....Manpower Management Support Branch
21. MOU.....Memorandum of Understanding
22. NCMIS.....Navy College Management Information System
23. NETPDC.....Navel Education and Training For  
Professional Development Center
24. OASC.....Online Academic Skills Course
25. OCONUS.....Outside the Continental United States

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- 26. OMPF.....Official Military Personnel File
- 27. PTCO.....Prospective Test Control Officer
- 28. SRB.....Service Record Book
- 29. TA.....Tuition Assistance
- 30. TCO.....Test Control Officer
- 31. VOLED.....Voluntary Education
- 32. VO-TECH.....Vocational - Technical