

## TUITION ASSISTANCE GUIDELINES AND REGULATIONS for FY2024

This assembles into one location, all Marine Corps Tuition Assistance (TA) regulations and procedures, as found in the Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 1322.25, all Changes; Marine Corps Order (MCO) 1560.25 and MARADMINs 147/07, 639/11, 687/14, 093/16, 255/18, 150/19, 218/19, and 765/20, as well as provides additional guidance for first-time-TA-users.

**DoDI 1322.25 and MCO 1560.25 remain the principal policy and guidance on DoD Voluntary Education programs** (though it should be noted that these FY24 Guidelines form Enclosure 5: Tuition Assistance..., as a part of the recently submitted draft for the "VolEd" MCO 1560.25A). These FY24 Guidelines (as well as the submitted VolEd MCO draft) strive to meet the challenges and tasks presented from the Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC) *2017 Institutional Task List for Deputy Commandants and Commanders* and the CMC *2021 Talent Management 2030*.

### References

- (a) 38 U.S.C. Ch 30
- (b) 10 U.S.C. Ch 1606
- (c) 38 U.S.C. Ch 33
- (d) DoDI 1341.13, Change 1, "Post 9/11 GI Bill"
- (e) 5 U.S.C. 552a
- (f) SECNAV M-5210-1, Records Management Manual
- (g) SECNAVINST 5211.5E, DoN Privacy Program
- (h) OPNAV 1560.10C, Administration of USMAP
- (i) Under Secretary of Defense memo, Uniform Tuition Assistance Policy: Foreign Language Proficiency dtd 12 Dec 2006
- (j) DoDI 1322.25, "Voluntary Education Programs," as amended
- (k) DoDI 1322.19, "Voluntary Education Programs in Overseas Areas"
- (l) MCO 1130.53R, Enlistment Incentive Programs
- (m) MCO P1400.32D, Ch 2, Marine Corps Promotion Manual, Volume 2
- (n) MCO P1400.31C, Ch 1, Marine Corps Promotion Manual, Volume 1
- (o) MCO 1616.1, Junior Enlisted Promotion Evaluation System
- (p) MCO 5210.11, Marine Corps Records Management Program
- (q) MCO 1230.5c, Classification Testing
- (r) DoDI 1322.16, "Montgomery GI Bill Program"

1. Purpose: to issue policies, regulations, procedures and all other pertinent information on the TA program as a component of the VolEd Program.

## 2. Background:

a. TA is to encourage and support active-duty and AR personnel to voluntarily attend post-secondary education courses delivered by fully appropriately accredited IHL on campus, at campus resident centers, on military installations or through online/distance learning, during off-duty time.

b. DC M&RA centrally manages TA funding for the Marine Corps with support from the Naval Education and Training Professional Development Center (NETPDC).

c. NETPDC manages the Navy College Management Information System (NCMIS), 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 recoupment when required. The installation ESO and all his/her personnel granted "by direction" authority serve as the TA funding authorization authority.

3. Eligibility. TA is authorized only for Marines who meet the standards and eligibility criteria contained herein, to include Active Duty Marine Corps personnel, AR, Extended Active duty (EAD) and Mobilized Reserves. The Marine Corps may not process TA for United States Navy or Coast Guard personnel, who are directed to the Virtual Education Center, or their own installation VolEd personnel. Initial and continued usage of TA is at commanders' discretion. Commanders, UEOs, and CAOs shall ensure Marines meet all eligibility criteria and have completed all Professional Military Education (PME) requirements, per references (m) and (n).

## 4. Funding Provisions and Restrictions.

a. TA is authorized only for tuition charges and tuition fees, for up to 100 percent of costs including lab, technology, and distance learning fees, not to exceed \$250 per semester hour (SH), or \$166.67 per quarter hour (QH), or \$16.67 per clock hour (CH), for undergraduate and graduate courses, and \$4,500 per individual per fiscal year (FY), per reference (j). (The following equivalents shall be applied herein and when necessary, with regard to earned academic credit: 1 SH = 1.5 QH = 15 CH.) Marines are responsible for costs that exceed TA authorized funding limits, 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 (j).

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

c. Marines will 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.

d. Prior to command approval, first-time TA applicants will Determine their readiness for the post-secondary education classroom and subsequent use of TA funds, by meeting the following requirements:

1) completion of the Personal Financial Management (PFM) training through the Personal Readiness Seminar (PRS) accomplished within ninety days of arrival at the first permanent duty station, or through PRS on any Marine Corps installation, or through completion of the PRS Survival Skills Training J30P-US1395 on Joint Knowledge Online; completion of the PFM training is submitted to the UEO prior to attending the TA Orientation Brief;

2) completion of the TA Orientation Brief by installation VolEd personnel; topics to be addressed in any manner during the TA Orientation Brief are found in Enclosure 6, Appendix E;

3) at least one of the following criteria:

(a) a minimum AFQT score of 50; or,

(b) a minimum General Technical score of 100 (from the ASVAB);  
or,

(c) successful completion of at least ten (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 ASP in the classroom; or,

(e) successful completion of the OASC; direction to ASP or OASC is accomplished through installation VolEd personnel; or,

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

4) If none of these criteria are met, the ESO retains the

discretion to authorize TA funding for one course per term, regardless of the number of credits earned through the course, until ten (10) SH have been completed successfully. Successful completion is indicated by no grade earned less than a C, per guidance for successful completion of TA-funded courses in ref (j).

e. Installation VolEd personnel shall document completion of these requirements to the Marine's official TA account as found in NCMIS. First-time TA applicants will receive authorized TA funding for only one course, unless documentation is provided that the Marine has completed at least 31 SH within a traditional academic setting, with a minimum grade point average (GPA) of 2.5, on the 4-point scale.

f. TA applications shall be submitted no more than 60 days prior to the start date of the class. Marines may submit more than one TA application per academic term, but TA applications may contain no more than one course per application. Marines may not have more than two TA-funded classes active at any given time.

g. TA will be authorized only for one course in the next academic term, should:

(1) the undergraduate cumulative GPA fall between 2.0 and 2.5, or the graduate cumulative GPA fall below 3.0;

(2) a grade of "D" or "F" is received in any course during the previous term in which TA was utilized (or, grade of "C" for graduate courses);

(3) a voluntary or involuntary withdrawal occurs from any course during the previous term in which TA was utilized.

(4) Marines with an involuntary withdrawal for a TA-funded course containing a NCMIS course status of either 5 (Duty Waiver), 6 (Transfer Waiver), 7 (Medical Waiver), or 8 (Excused), may submit a TA request for a 2<sup>nd</sup> course for the same term, if documentation is submitted that a course was successfully completed between the conclusion of the academic term containing the involuntary withdrawal and the beginning of the academic term of the TA request. Funding for this course must be from a source other than TA, and a transcript showing successful completion of this course, displaying course number, title, grade, term dates and the institution where the course was completed, should be submitted to installation VolEd personnel prior to the authorization of TA funding for the 2<sup>nd</sup> TA request.

h. TA funds for approved involuntary withdrawal waivers will count

toward individual FY caps.

i. Career and technical education certificate programs who wish to receive TA will:

(1) be accredited by an accrediting body recognized by the Department of Education;

(2) be approved by the Department of Veterans Affairs;

(3) have a signed DOD Memorandum of Understanding.

k. Marines may utilize TA toward one academic degree at the next level higher than that currently held by the Marine, following the policies and guidance contained herein and in reference (j). The academic degree ranks are as follows in ascending order: Certificate, Associate's, Bachelor's, Master's/Post Baccalaureate. The academic certificate may be at any level, provided that completion of a Master's degree is not a requirement for admission into the program. 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 the conferral of an Associate's or Baccalaureate degree.

l. The maximum number of SH allowed for TA funding shall be capped at Undergraduate-138; Graduate-45.

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

n. Marines are strongly encouraged to submit an education plan prior to Authorization of TA funds; however, 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. 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.

o. Marines who completed an initial Master's degree through any Military Studies program at Marine Corps University (MCU) will be eligible for TA funding toward a second master's degree. This pertains, however, only toward a second Master's. The Marine loses eligibility for TA towards future graduate degrees if more than one

Master's degree is earned through MCU. MCU Marines shall present their MCU transcripts to installation VolEd personnel prior to receiving the TA Orientation brief and subsequent submission of TA applications. This is unique to Marine Corps University students.

p. Marines who fail to complete a course successfully must reimburse received TA funds. Successful course completion, in compliance with ref (j), 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. TA funds will be recouped from Marines for "D" and "F"/fail grades, unresolved "I"/Incomplete, or courses from which the Marine voluntarily withdrew, resulting in a "W" grade.

q. Recoupment for course withdrawals indicated by a grade of "W" and related to duty, medical or personal or family emergency circumstances, may be waived. Waiver requests shall not be submitted directly to NETPDC in Pensacola FL, but instead shall be signed by the Commanding Officer (CO), or the UEO, and submitted to the installation ESO for review. The waiver request should contain supporting documentation including where appropriate, TAD or PCS Orders, and a descriptive narrative explaining the change in the service member's situation beyond the control of the service member and unknown at the time of the TA request. The ESO determines if justification for a waiver is warranted, and if so, shall forward onto NETPDC with an additional support statement. All reimbursement procedures and related pertinent information are obtained from installation VolEd personnel.

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

s. TA cannot be authorized for fees related to certifications, License exams, or credentials.

t. 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. Marines do not reimburse TA to the Installation VolEd Ctr, but they may obtain all pertinent information regarding TA reimbursement from the Installation VolEd Ctr ESO and/or any VolEd Ctr personnel with "by direction" authority from the ESO. T-I-S requirements are as follows:

(1) Commissioned Officers must serve 24 months per reference (j);

(2) Enlisted personnel must serve 60 days;

(3) Limited Duty Officers (LDOs), Chief Warrant Officers (CWOs) and Warrant Officers (WOs) who do not hold a Baccalaureate degree must serve 60 days; LDOs, CWOs, and WOs who have completed a Baccalaureate degree must serve 24 months;

(4) Reserve Component Officers on active-duty orders/mobilization must serve 24 months. 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 AR program toward the 24-month T-I-S requirement.

u. TA is not authorized for non-credit courses, training programs, or programs under continuing education or workforce development.

v. Marines assigned to Military Occupation School or residential Professional Military Education (i.e., Command and Staff college, Corporals Course, Sergeants Course, Career Course, etc.), SkillBridge, or any other special professional education program shall not receive TA funding until they return to their regular or permanent duty.

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

## 5. Fiscal Instructions

a. Funds to administer TA are appropriated annually and shall be available to fund-approving authorities through NETPDC, the centrally-managed TA authority.

b. When funds are allocated, the DC M&RA shall provide NETPDC with a funding ceiling which limits obligation authority. Individual TA limits are defined by the DC M&RA and not subject to waivers.

c. The start date of the academic term of a TA-funded course shall determine the chargeable FY appropriation. TA requests received in one FY for courses starting in the next FY must wait until the first day of the next FY to receive authorization of TA funds.

d. NETPDC shall fund all courses, regardless of length, immediately

upon receiving the invoice prepared by the institution through the Wide Area Work Flow (WAWF) system.

e. Requests for TA funding must be submitted and have received command approval through a unit CAO appointed by the UEO, no later than 48 hours prior to the course start date.

f. TA funding authorizations shall not occur between 15-30 September, inclusive, allowing for NETPDC to close out all records for the current FY; therefore, requests for TA funding for courses with a start date between 15-30 September, inclusive, must have received command approval via a unit CAO by 12 September, to receive TA funding authorization by 14 September, in compliance with the 48-hour deadline.

g. Changes to the TA voucher to ensure total accuracy of the document, shall be made by installation VolEd personnel prior to the end of the school's Drop/Add period. The Marine must contact installation VolEd personnel immediately to either cancel the voucher document, or execute such changes.

h. TA requests shall be complete and accurate. The application must contain the school code, the course start and end dates, and course number and title, as stated in the school's academic catalog. If both the academic term start and end date must be changed on an existing TA voucher document, the document must be cancelled, and the Marine must submit a new TA request. The installation ESO may require the use of a Cost Verification Statement to ensure complete and accurate information on the TA request.

i. Grades must be submitted to NETPDC within 30 days after the course end date. 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. A pay checkage, DD Form 139, is initiated if no response to the indebtedness communication is received within 30 days of its issuance. 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.

j. Individual student Marines who receive a grade of "I" - Incomplete - for a TA-funded course will have up to 6 months from the term end date, to successfully covert the grade to that which is successful according to ref j; however, the school's deadline for completion of an "Incomplete" takes precedence if said deadline is

shorter than 6 months. The Incomplete - "I" - grade must be resolved prior to the submission of any further TA requests.

## 6. Administration.

a. Marines shall contact installation VolEd personnel to ensure full compliance with all current Marine Corps TA policies and criteria as outlined herein and in reference (j). TA authorization is contingent upon responsible stewardship of available funds by the installation's ESO and all VolEd personnel. The ESO retains the discretion to treat each TA application solely on the merits of the individual case, per reference (j).

b. Installation ESOs will coordinate with Public Affairs Offices, Career Retention Specialists, and local commands via the MCCS Director to ensure that all eligible Marines are aware of available VolEd Program opportunities. Personnel should ensure that information and advisement are devoid of bias and prejudice.

c. 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, meeting all course requirements, 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.

d. The course instructor, nor the institution shall not alter the course requirements, or academic term demands for the service member, either in favor of, or counter to those requirements and demands put forth to other non-military students in the course. Attention to command schedule commitments that may preclude successful course completion, remains vital to the success of the USMC TA program per the policies contained herein.

e. Commands should coordinate whenever possible with the installation ESO well in advance of scheduled deployments, to assist deploying Marines wishing to pursue Post-Secondary Voluntary Education opportunities.

(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 deployed or to which they deployed.

(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.

(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.

(4) TA for deployments to Okinawa is processed through MCB Camp Butler.

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

(6) TA for Marines on I-I Duty is processed at MARFORRES.

7. Marines remain encouraged to participate in all appropriate personal and professional readiness programs, 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.

(See Appendix below for TA Brief Topics)

## Appendix E: 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 - VolEd 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