



Voluntary Credentialing Program (VCP) Credentialing Assistance (CA) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)



Contact Info

Contact the Education and Training Quota Management Command's (ETQC) Credentialing Assistance office at ETQC-SMB-CGCOOL@USCG.MIL or 757-756-5300.

CG COOL Website

Where can I go to see what credentials are available?

- The CG COOL website is the primary source of information and displays all eligible voluntary credentials a service member can pursue - <https://www.cool.osd.mil/uscg/index.htm>
- Select, "Steps to Apply" for instructions to request Credentialing Assistance (CA) funding.

What if the credential I want to pursue is not on Coast Guard COOL?

- If a credential is not listed on CG COOL, submit a request to CGCOOL@USCG.MIL and include certification name and credentialing agency's website.
- Certifications and Licenses must be on the CG COOL site for ETQC to fund it.

What if I receive approval, then the credential is removed from the CG COOL website, will ETQC still pay for it?

- Yes. If the Credentialing Assistance (CA) application was authorized by ETQC in MyCG ED, then the member will be reimbursed.

Coverage and Limitations

What if I previously earned a credential, will the Voluntary Credentialing Program (VCP) Credentialing Assistance (CA) cover the renewal fees associated with the previously earned credential?

- Yes. ETQC will fund the renewal fees as long as all eligibility criteria are met IAW COMDINST 1540/10 and ALCOAST 177/22.

I previously paid for the credential, can I be reimbursed for it?

- No. Members must receive approval from ETQC prior to paying for any type of fees.
- Other funding options: CG Foundation Grant, CGMA, GI Bill.

How will I know if I am ready to take the exam?

- Some agencies require specific education, training, and/or work experience. Members must review the CG COOL website and agency website before submitting a credentialing assistance request to ensure they meet the credentialing agency's requirements.

Does Credentialing Assistance (CA) cover preparation and training materials?

- IAW with ALCOAST 177/22, CA will cover preparation materials (books, study guides, etc.).
- Submit CA application in MyCG Ed and enter the cost of books and study guides in same application with exam fees. After ETQC approves your CA application, submit OF-1164 and receipts (exam and prep materials) to ETQC for reimbursement.

Does CA pay for training courses that are required for certain credentials?

- Effective summer 2022, CA will pay for required training courses associated with credentials listed on the CG COOL site.
- Effective summer 2022, submit CA application in MyCG ED:
 - Enter the credential and credentialing agency associated with the training
 - Fee Type = "MMC Training" or "Non-MMC Training"
 - Dates = start and end date of the course

Is there a maximum amount the Coast Guard will pay for CA?

- Eligible members can request up to \$4500 per Fiscal Year (FY) for exams and training combined.
- The FY is 1 Oct – 30 September.
- There is no limit to the number of applications a member can submit as long as the combined amount does not exceed \$4500 per FY.

Are officers eligible?

- Yes. IAW ACN 011/22, Active Duty and SELRES Officers are eligible to participate in the Voluntary Credentialing Program (VCP).

Is there a service obligation?

- Members must have 6 months remaining in service from the exam or training date. There is no other service obligation for eligible active duty or SELRES.

Will the VCP pay for certifications and licenses required for the member's Coast Guard job?

- Credentialing Assistance is for voluntary credentials. As such, if the certification or license is required for member's rating, it is not funded by the VCP.

What is the policy for the Voluntary Credentialing Program (VCP) Credentialing Assistance (CA)?

- [COMDTINST 1540.10 \(10 Jan 2020\)](#)
- [ALCOAST NOTICE 11/22 \(effective 1 April 2022\)](#)
- [ALCOAST 177/22 \(effective 11 May 2022\)](#)

Are there any lifetime credit maximums or annual caps?

- There is a fiscal year (FY) cap of \$4500 for exams and training combined.
- There is no limit to the number of applications as long as the combined amount does not exceed \$4500 per FY.
- There is no lifetime maximum. CA is funded on a first-come first-served basis as long as funds are available.

Is there a point in the FY that ETQC will stop taking applications?

- ETQC will follow the established year-end guidelines for financial obligations and will post end-of-year deadlines to submit CA requests in MyCG Ed and the CG COOL sites.

What will happen if there is no longer funding for Credentialing Assistance?

- Applications will be approved on a first-come first-served basis. If there is a funding shortfall, the fleet will be notified.

Can I use Tuition Assistance (TA) and Credentialing Assistance (CA) at the same time?

- Yes. You can use both TA and CA at the same time as long as you meet the eligibility requirements for both programs.

What is the difference between certifications on the CG COOL site and academic certificates funded by tuition assistance (TA)?

- The Credentialing Assistance (CA) program is for certifications and licensures earned through state/local/public/private organizations and agencies (not academic institutions).
- Academic certificates are funded by TA and earned at eligible colleges and universities.

What is MilGears and is it required?

- MilGears is an interactive tool that helps service members connect their learning and experiences to career and education opportunities including degrees and certifications. The Engage My Career (EMC) tool helps service member's make a record of their education, training, & skills,

see how their experience compare to the requirements for civilian & federal occupations, & access job postings/opportunities. <https://milgears.osd.mil/>

- Although not required, members are encouraged to review their MilGears assessment with an Education Services Officer (ESO). ESOs can help interpret the assessment, identify missing items and provide recommendations and counseling as needed.
- Upload MilGears assessment to MyCG Ed.

What documentation needs to be submitted in order to apply for CA?

- Submit application in MyCG Ed; your ESO and ETQC will verify eligibility in Direct Access.
- If your “Person Profile” in Direct Access is missing information, you may be requested to submit additional documentation to verify eligibility.
- SELRES members must upload a point statement in MyCG Ed.
- Completed degrees/certificates/certifications must be reported and entered in Direct Access.
- After your CA application has been authorized by ETQC, submit OF-1164 and receipt(s) for reimbursement.

Does the Credentialing Assistance (CA) application need to be related to member’s rating?

- No. The CA application does not have to be related to rating, officer specialty, or collateral duty.
- IAW ALCOAST 177/22, members may request funding for any credential on the CG COOL site.

How Do I Apply For Credentialing Assistance?

Follow the 5 Easy Steps:

1. **Find and Select Related Credential** – At the CG COOL site <https://www.cool.osd.mil/uscg/index.htm> use the “Go to: Rating or Navigator” or “Full Credential Search” to see how your Coast Guard training and experience match up with civilian credentials. Learn about selected credential requirements and contact the credentialing agency to validate that you meet their eligibility criteria.
 - Meet with your Education Services Officer (ESO) during this first step.
2. **Request Approval via MyCG Ed** - Apply for credentialing assistance (CA) via MyCG Ed at <https://myeducation.netc.navy.mil>. Applications for CA must be submitted 14 calendar days prior to exam date or training start date.
3. **Pay for Approved Fees** - Upon receipt of authorization from ETQC, proceed to pay for approved fees. Once payment is made, upload an itemized receipt with an electronically endorsed Request for Miscellaneous Reimbursement (OF-1164) to MyCG Ed within 30 calendar days of payment.
4. **Get your Credential** - Upon CA approval and payment of fees, complete the credentialing requirements (i.e. take exam) through the credentialing agency. Provide ETQC with results within 90 days.
5. **Report Results** - Upload a legible copy of your completed credential to MyCG Ed within 30 calendar days of attainment.

What if I need to make a change to the exam date or amount on the approved CA application?

- Before command approval, you can make changes in MyCG Ed under “Review Applications” at <https://myeducation.netc.navy.mil>
- After command approval, send an email to ETQC-SMB-CGCOOL@USCG.MIL to request changes or cancellations.

Can I submit the same CA application for training and the exam?

- No. Submit separate CA applications for training and exams. Complete the appropriate fields in the application related to your request.

Reporting Results

Do I have to report the exam results to ETQC?

- Yes. Submit exam results (pass/fail) within 90 calendar days of CA authorization. Submit copy of credential within 30 calendar days of credential attainment.
- Upload exam results and completed credential in [MyCG Ed](#).
- ETQC will add your certification/license to Direct Access and Joint Service Transcript (JST) records.

Do I have to report the training results to ETQC?

- If CA funded your credential training course, upload certificate of completion to [MyCG Ed](#).

Reimbursement and Repayment

Does the member receive reimbursement or is the credentialing agency paid directly?

- After receiving approval/authorization in MyCG Ed, the member must pay the fees first and then submit receipt and OF-1164 to be reimbursed.

How long does it take to receive reimbursement?

- ETQC will forward the request and all supporting documentation to CG FINANCE Center within 3 business days. Member will receive reimbursement via direct deposit in 2-3 weeks.

Do I repay CA if I do not pass?

- No. You are not required to repay CA; however, you will not be able to request funding for the same credential again.

Are there any situations where I am required to pay back CA?

- Yes. If you do not submit your exam results or completed credential within the specified timeframe, ETQC will initiate recoupment.
- Exam results (and training completion) is required within 90 days and completed credential is required within 30 days.

Is there a waiver process for Credentialing Assistance?

- Submit waiver request to Education and Training Quota Management Command at ETQC-SMB-CGCOOL@USCG.MIL for review and consideration.

What if I applied for a credential and it crossed fiscal years (FY)?

- The exam date determines the Fiscal Year (1 Oct – 30 Sept).
- Effective summer 2022, the start date of the training course determines the FY.

Will the program only reimburse for CG\$ logos on the CG COOL site?

- All credentials listed on CG COOL can be reimbursed if member is eligible.
- Members may request that a credential be added to CG COOL by submitting request to CGCOOL@uscg.mil

Eligibility

Who is eligible for Credentialing Assistance (CA)?

- CA is available to eligible active duty and SELRES members (enlisted and officers).

I am a SELRES member and would like to use CA. Is there anything specific that I need to do?

- Upload a point statement in [MyCG Ed](#) in addition to following the 5 Easy Steps.
- Members of the SELRES who are drilling reservists and have made satisfactory progress in the current year and have met the participation standards for the previous anniversary year are eligible.

What documentation needs to be submitted in order to apply for Credentialing Assistance (CA)?

- The ESO and ETQC will verify eligibility in Direct Access.
- If your “Person Profile” in Direct Access is missing information, additional documentation may be requested to verify eligibility.

Note: Completed degrees/certificates/certifications must be reported and entered in Direct Access IAW [ACN 050/19](#)

- SELRES members upload a point statement.

What are the eligibility requirements for Credentialing Assistance (CA)?

- CA is available to eligible enlisted and officer personnel (active duty and SELRES).
- Must be in compliance with Weight and Body Fat Standards
- No misconduct, to include court-martial punishment, judicial punishment, or non-judicial punishment within the last 12 months.
- Marked "Ready" or "Not Ready" on Enlisted Employee Reviews.
- Have at least 6 months remaining on service obligation.
- SELRES members who meet participation standards including current readiness metrics for the previous 12 months. A point statement will need to be uploaded into MyCG Ed.

Merchant Mariner Credentials (MMC)

Does the Credentialing Assistance program pay for TWIC fees?

- Yes. Submit application in [MyCG ED](#) and ETQC will coordinate with the Military-to-Mariner (M2M) office for approval.

Does Credentialing Assistance pay for MMC exams?

- The National Maritime Center (NMC) has waived MMC fees for most active duty members. NMC - [National Maritime Center \(NMC\) Home Page \(uscg.mil\)](#)
- Review policy letter here: <https://cg.portal.uscg.mil/units/forcecom/VCP/M2M%20Library/CG-MMC-Policy-Letter-02-20.pdf>
- Contact the Military-to-Mariner Office at CGM2M@USCG.MIL for assistance.

Does Credentialing Assistance pay for MMC training?

- Yes. IAW ALCOAST 177/22, training courses required for MMC credentials are funded by the Voluntary Credentialing Program. Submit application in MyCG Ed and receive approval from your ESO and ETQC before registering for any type of training. Select, "MMC Training" as the "Fee Type" in the application.
- Courses must be from an approved National Maritime Center (NMC) training provider: https://www.dco.uscg.mil/nmc/training_assessments/

What if I have questions about MMC credentials?

- Contact the Military-to-Mariner (M2M) office at CGM2M@USCG.MIL to review options for merchant mariner credentials.

Credentialing Resources

Where can I find more information about the Voluntary Credentialing Program (VCP) and the Credentialing Assistance (CA) process?

- CG COOL website - <https://www.cool.osd.mil/uscg/index.htm>
- MyCG Ed portal - <https://myeducation.netc.navy.mil/>
- ETQC Portal- <https://cg.portal.uscg.mil/units/forcecom/ETQC/SitePages/Home.aspx>
- Military-to-Mariner Portal-
[https://cg.portal.uscg.mil/units/forcecom/VCP/SitePages/Military%20to%20Mariner%20\(M2M\).aspx](https://cg.portal.uscg.mil/units/forcecom/VCP/SitePages/Military%20to%20Mariner%20(M2M).aspx)
- MilGears website - <https://milgears.osd.mil/>
- VCP Policy - COMDTINST 1540.10
<https://cg.portal.uscg.mil/units/forcecom/ETQC/Documents/Document%20Links/COMDINST1540.10.pdf>
- ALCOAST NOTICE 11/22
<https://cg.portal.uscg.mil/units/forcecom/ETQC/Shared%20Documents/ACN%20011.22.pdf>
- ALCOAST 177/22
[https://cg.portal.uscg.mil/units/forcecom/ETQC/credentialingsite/Shared%20Documents/ALCOAST%20177.22%20\(May%202022\).pdf](https://cg.portal.uscg.mil/units/forcecom/ETQC/credentialingsite/Shared%20Documents/ALCOAST%20177.22%20(May%202022).pdf)

ESO Guidance

When should ESO's approve the member's request in MyCG Ed?

- All application requests must be approved by the ESO in MyCG ED prior to 14 days from the exam date and no more than 90 days from exam date. It is recommended that member submit their request at least 30 days in advance.

How long does it typically take ETQC to authorize CA application?

- After command/ESO approval, ETQC will authorize the request within 3 business days and/or contact the member for more information.
- If the application is for a Merchant Mariner credential, it might take longer because ETQC coordinates with the M2M office before approving.

Will ESOs be required to submit a memo before signing as a command approver?

- No. As long as ESO has been designated by their command, they are eligible to approve the request.
- Member should enter the ESO's email address as the "command approver" in the CA application.

How do ESO's verify the member's eligibility?

- Review the ESO user guide at the ETQC portal site for detailed instructions on processes and procedures to approve member's CA application.