USCG Credentialing Assistance (CA) User Guide for Service Members

20 May 2022

Education and Training Quota Management Command (ETQC)

Contents

A. Credentialing Basics.

1. <u>Voluntary Credentialing Program (VCP)</u>. The Coast Guard Voluntary Credentialing Program Instruction (COMDTINST 1540.10) establishes the policy on program eligibility, credentials and occupations covered, oversight mechanisms for the payment of expenses and benefits, as well as limitations, roles, and responsibilities for implementing the VCP. The VCP allows eligible members to obtain credentials, certifications, and licenses while serving in the U.S. Coast Guard. The VCP employs Credentialing Assistance (CA), executed by Education and Training Quota Management Command (ETQC), to reimburse members for authorized fees in the pursuit of credentials.

2. <u>Importance of Credentials</u>. Credentials increase chances of promotions and improves the professionalism and expertise of personnel within their respective ratings. Federal, state, or local law may require specific credentials to legally perform some jobs. Obtaining credentials – certifications and licenses – demonstrates that members meet industry standards. Credentials may be required for a job, can increase the likelihood of employment, and/or a higher salary. They aid career advancement and streamline the transition of separating members entering the civilian workforce. Certifications and licensures ensures the Coast Guard workforce remains Relevant, Ready, and Responsive.

3. <u>Eligible members</u>. Credentialing Assistance (CA) is authorized for qualified Active Duty and SELRES members (Enlisted and Officers) who meet VCP eligibility requirements as outlined in COMDTINST 1540.10.

4. <u>Coverage & Limitations</u>. CA funds licenses and certifications listed on the CG COOL website.

   a. The CG COOL website displays credentials authorized for reimbursement under the voluntary credentialing program (https://www.cool.osd.mil/uscg/index.htm). Credentials not listed on CG COOL are not authorized for reimbursement.

   b. Enlisted and Officers are eligible for CA up to $4500 per Fiscal Year (FY)

   c. CA will be provided on a first-come, first-served basis to the extent that funding is available.

Table A.1. Authorization Criteria

AUTHORIZED	NOT AUTHORIZED
Exam fees	Credentials not listed on CG COOL
State license fees	Credentials paid under other federally funded program that constitute duplicate of benefits
Application and Membership fees	Credentialing fees paid under a training program
Renewal/Maintenance fees	Credentials required for a Coast Guard position or condition of employment
MMC Training Courses	Fees incurred without authorization from ETQC
Books and Study Guides	Subsequent attempts if previously reimbursed and failed
Up to $4500/FY for Enlisted and Officers	Courses not completed from an approved training provider.

B. Request Credentialing Assistance (CA) in Five Easy Steps.

1. Find and select related credential
2. Request approval in MyCG Ed
3. Pay for approved fees and request reimbursement
4. Get your credential
5. Report results

C. Step 1 - Find and Select Related Credential.

1. The Credentialing Opportunities On-Line (COOL) website is the primary source to search approved certifications and licenses (https://www.cool.osd.mil/uscg/index.htm).

    a. Review the site with your Education Services Officer (ESO) and research options related to your rating, out-of-rate assignment, collateral duty, and/or academic degree.

2. Use the various tabs, search filters, and icons to narrow your choices. Search all credentials by selecting, "Full Credential Search" in the middle of the homepage.
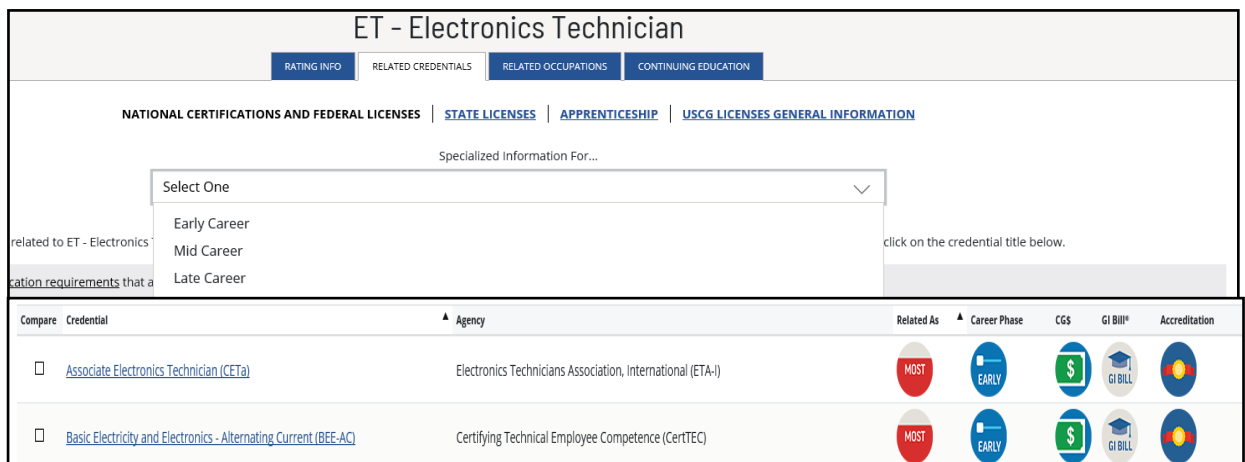
D. Step 2 - Request Approval in MyCG Ed.

1. Login with CAC or DoD ID number (**https://myeducation.netc.navy.mil**):

2. Select the "COOL" icon on the MyCG Ed home page:
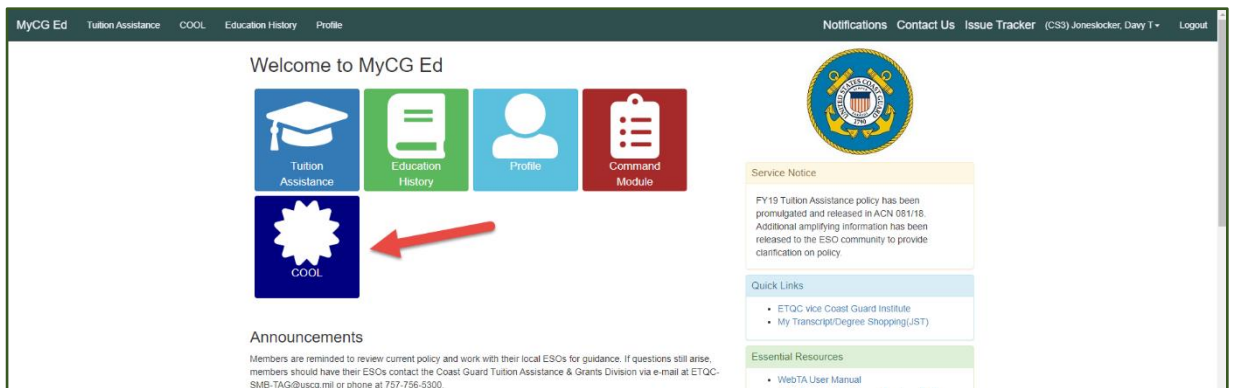
3. The COOL landing page:
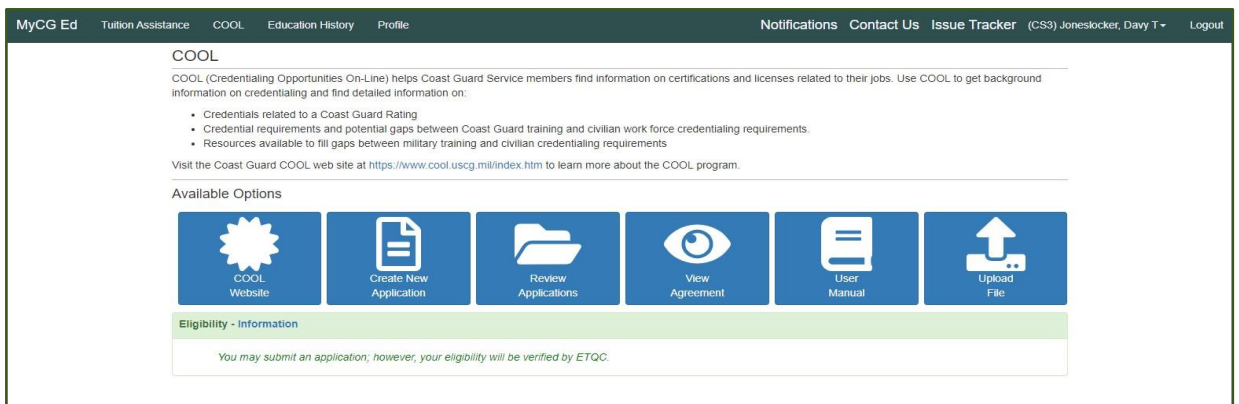
➢ The COOL landing page displays the following:

- CG COOL Website – search eligible credentials
- Create New Application and Review Prior CA Applications
- View Agreement and User Manual
- Upload Files: SELRES Point Statement, OF-1164, Receipts, Exam Results, Completed Credentials

4. Complete outstanding eligibility requirements:
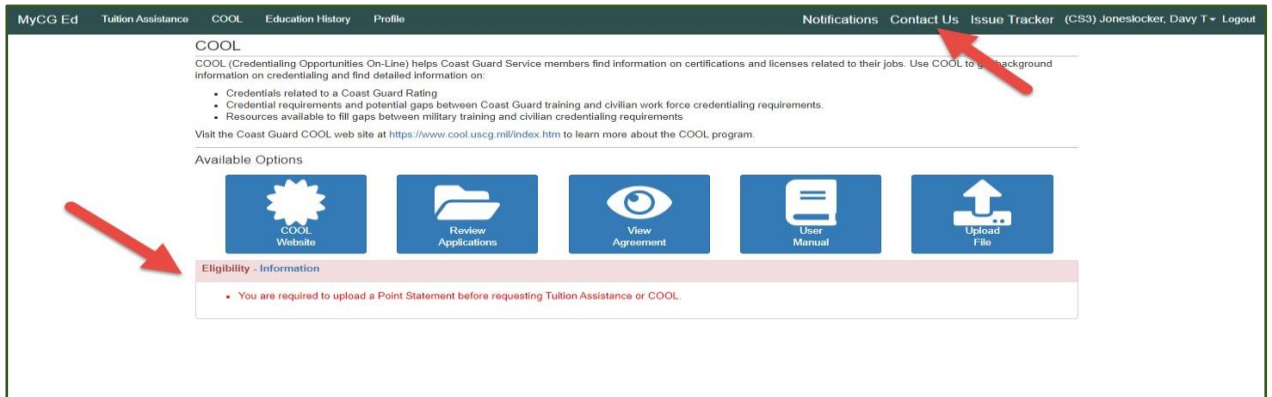
➢ For eligibility questions, click on "Contact Us" for ETQC information.

5. Select, "Create New Application:"
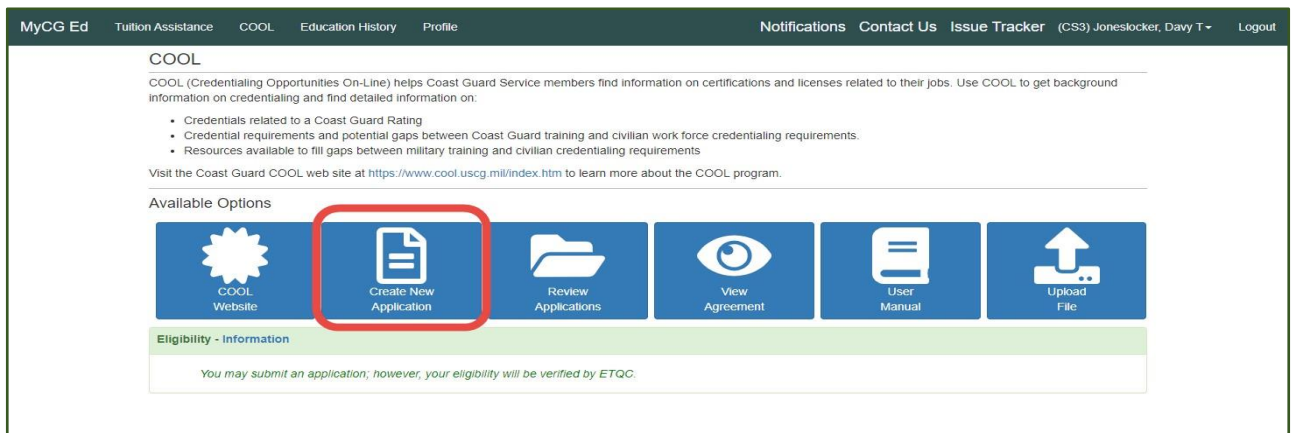
6. Read and accept the agreement:

7. Ensure profile information is correct:

8. Enter ESO (Command Approver) information:

9. Enter Credential information:

> ➤ **Choose the correct option in the drop-down list.**
> ➤ **If requesting books or study guides, enter the total amount of all associated fees (exam and prep materials) in the "Requested Fees" section. The OF-1164 and itemized receipt(s) must accurately reflect authorized fees.**

10. Self-Evaluation and Policy Acknowledgement.

> ➤ Read and acknowledge the self-evaluation.

➢ Save the application. It will remain in an "under edit" status until submitted.
➢ All boxes must be checked before submitting, regardless if SELRES or active duty.

11. Digitally sign and submit application to your ESO:

12. Verify submission:

13. ESO (Command Approver) notified by email:
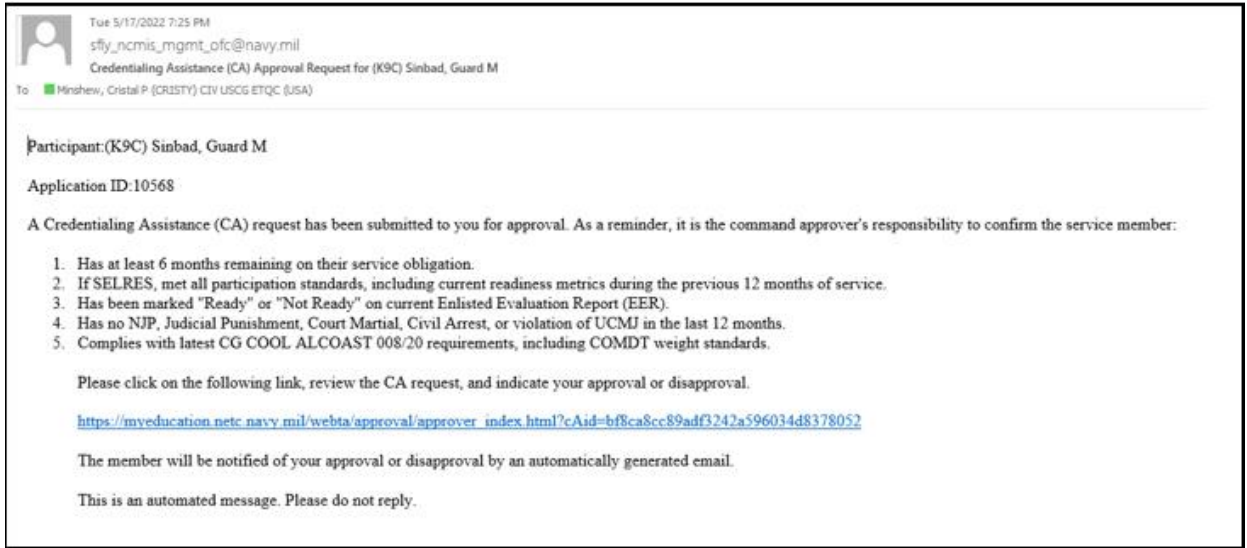
> A link in the email will direct the ESO to approve or deny the request. Before approving, the ESO will verify eligibility.

14. ESO (Command Approver) Approves or Rejects the Application:
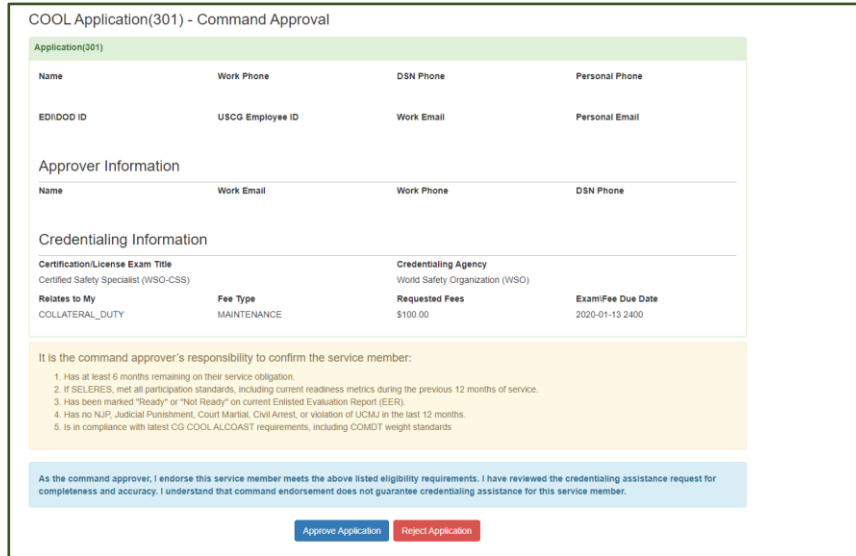
15. Once approved by the ESO (Command Approver), it's forwarded to ETQC:

From: My Education   Entered on 2020-01-10 1148
Subject: Credentialing Assistance (CA) request Command Approved and Forwarded to ETQC for   [× Delete] [Close]
Authorization

(CS3) Joneslocker, Davy T,

Your Credentialing Assistance (CA) request has been conditionally approved and forwarded to
the credentialing office at Education and Training Quota Management Command (ETQC) for
final adjudication.

Check the status of your request in MyCG Ed.

Once your CA request has been authorized by ETQC, login to MyCG Ed to view and print the
authorization voucher.

https://qa-myeducation.ncdc.navy.mil/webta/

Comment: Approved by Guillemette, Kimberlie with comment: Great Job!

This is an automated message. Please do not reply.

16. Member will be notified by email at each stage of the application process. Additionally, status may be tracked in MyCG Ed under "Review Applications":

| | COOL Website | Review Applications | View Agreement | User Manual | Upload File |

Only one active application is allowed at a time.

Current Applications(Review All Applications)

App ID	Created Date	Updated Date	Credential	Agency	Exam\Fee Due Date	Status
21	2019-12-05 1425	2019-12-10 1337	Registered Dental Assistant (RDA)	American Medical Technologists (AMT)	2019-12-25 2400	Submitted

Eligibility - Information

You may submit an application; however, your eligibility will be verified by ETQC.

17. Document History:

Self Evaluation and Acknowledgement

I have fully read CG COOL ACN XXX/19 and understand credentialing opportunities must receive preapproval for reimbursement. ✓

I have reviewed the CG COOL website & verified that all eligibility requirements for CA are met. ✓

If a SELRES, I certify I meet and have met participation standards during the previous 12 months. ✓

I understand that I must upload official exam results within 90 days of submission of OF-1164. ✓

I understand that I must upload receipts and endorse OF-1164 for reimbursement within 30 days. ✓

I understand that I must submit a copy of my credential within 30 days of attainment. I understand that failure to do so may result in a recoupment of all funds reimbursed. ✓

I have not received funding from any other government source that would constitute duplication of payment (e.g., GI Bill, local command funding). ✓

⌃ Application History(3 Events)

Cancelled on 2020-01-09 1242
Comment:Participant has cancelled document.
Command Approved on 2020-01-08 0900
Comment:Approved by Guillemette, Kimberlie with comment: TESTING
Submitted for Command Approval on 2020-01-08 0858
Comment:Participant has submitted application to kim.guillemette@navy.mil
Application created on 2020-01-08 0855

➢ Review application status under "Application History."

18. ETQC will authorize (or deny) the request. View/print the authorization voucher:

From: My Education   Entered on 2020-01-10 1213
Subject: Your Credentialing Assistance (CA) Request Has Been Authorized by ETQC   ✖ Delete   Close

(CS3) Joneslocker, Davy T,

Your request for credentialing assistance has been authorized by the credentialing office at Education and Training Quota Management Command (ETQC).

Log in to https://myeducation.netc.navy.mil/webta/home.html#nbb to view and print your Credentialing Assistance authorization.

Notify ETQC immediately at ETQC-SMB-CGCOOL@USCG.MIL with any changes or cancellations (i.e. exam cancellation, date changes, cost changes, etc).

Credential: Emergency Medical Responder (EMR)

Agency: National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians (NREMT)

Exam/Fee Due Date: 2020-02-03 2400

This is an automated message. Please do not reply.

ETQC FORM 1540(01/2020)   **CREDENTIALING ASSISTANCE (CA) AUTHORIZATION**

ID: _____   RATE/RANK: NAME:

CERTIFICATION/LICENSE EXAM TITLE:
CREDENTIALING AGENCY:
CREDENTIALING FEE TYPE:
REQUESTED FEES:
EXAM/FEE DUE DATE:
AUTHORIZED AMOUNT:

I have read, understand, and will comply with the provisions of the Coast Guard Voluntary Credentialing Program Policy, COMDTINST 1540.56, ACN 214/18, National Defense Authorization Act for FY2015. I understand this authorization is valid only for the credential, certification, or license title listed above. I am responsible for contacting the credentialing agency to complete all requirements for Credentialing, Certification, or License Title prior to requesting CA. Failure to notify ETQC-SMB-CGCOOL of changes, corrections and status updates may result in a collection against me via my Commanding Officer. If I separate, my indebtedness will be referred to the Defense Finance and Accounting Services for collection. If I fail to submit my official credentialing exam results, I will not be able to receive additional CA settlements.

Applicant's Signature   Phone

AUTHORIZATION NUMBER   DATE AUTHORIZED   SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED
                                                   GOVERNMENT PERSONNEL

The purpose of this form is to advise a member that they have been approved for the settlement of the exam fee, application fees, or maintenance fees listed on the authorization. I understand that I have 30 days to request settlement by uploading the official payment receipt from my credentialing, certification, or licensing agency as well as a Claim for Reimbursement of Expenditures on Official Business (OF-1164) to MyCGEd portal. I understand that I have up to 90 calendar days to submit pass/fail results to ETQC-SMB-CGCOOL and 30 calendar days upon agency notification of report completion of the credential.

ETQC FORM 1540(01/2020)
Students may email ETQC-SMB-CGCOOL@uscg.mil if assistance is needed.

E. Step 3 - Pay for Approved Fees and Request Reimbursement

1. After authorization by ETQC, view/print Official Form (OF)-1164 within the authorized application in MyCG Ed. The form will be prefilled with specific information.

   a. Example of Miscellaneous Reimbursement Official Form (OF-1164):

   b. Enter date, types of fees, cost, and digitally sign:

2. Submit the OF-1164 with valid receipt(s) within 30 days of exam/fee payment. Upload signed OF-1164 and receipt(s) as one document in MyCG Ed or email to ETQC-SMB-CGCOOL@uscg.mil.

There are two areas in MyCG Ed to upload:

➢ Within the application under "Review Applications"
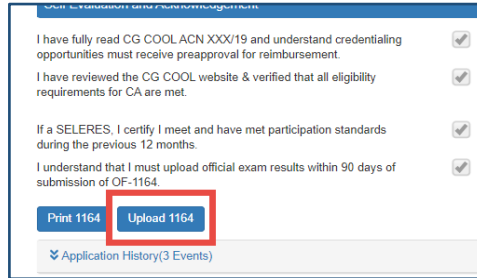
➢ The COOL landing page, "Upload File:"

F. Step 4 - Get Your Credential.

1. After the credentialing assistance (CA) request has been authorized and fees have been paid, complete the credentialing requirements through the credentialing agency.

2. Arrange exams, renewals, etc. through the agency/organization responsible for the credential.

3. Ensure you understand the requirements to keep the credential(s) current.

G. Step 5 – Report Results.

1. Submit a legible copy of your credential within 30 calendar days of attainment.

2. Exam results and completed credential can be uploaded in MyCG Ed or emailed to ETQC.

3. ETQC will enter completed credential into Direct Access and the Joint Services Transcript (JST).

H. Timeline.

14 days	Request approval from ETQC at least 14 days prior to scheduling a credentialing exam(s) or incurring fee(s).
30 days	Upload Form 1164 and valid receipt for reimbursement within 30 days of exam or fee payment.
90 days	Submit exam results (pass/fail) within 90 days of initial CA authorization (upload in MyCG Ed or email to ETQC).
30 days	Submit copy of credential within 30 days of credential attainment (upload in MyCG Ed or email to ETQC).

1. **Request approval from ETQC at least 14 calendar days prior to and no more than 90 days prior to scheduling a credentialing exam(s) or incurring any fee(s) (i.e., including registering for, scheduling, or taking an exam). <u>Payment of credentialing fees prior to authorization from ETQC is at the member's expense and will not be reimbursed.</u>**

2. Electronically endorse and submit Request for Miscellaneous Reimbursement (OF-1164) with valid receipts to ETQC within 30 calendar days of exam/fee date.

3. Submit legible copy of official pass or fail exam results (as applicable), on official agency letterhead (if applicable), to ETQC within 90 calendar days of authorization of CA. Failure to provide a copy of official exam results (if applicable) may result in recoupment of funds.

4. Submit a legible copy of credential(s) to ETQC within 30 calendar days of credential attainment, for entry into Direct Access. Failure to provide a legible copy of credential(s) may result in recoupment of funds.

I. Repayment Procedures.

If exam results and/or completed credential is not submitted in accordance with COMDTINST 1540.10, ETQC will initiate the recoupment process. Pay garnishment will be determined by PPC-MAS IAW the COMDTINST M7220.29 and the Personnel & Pay Procedures Manual, PPCINST M1000.2 (series).

J.   Merchant Mariner Credentials (MMC).

1. Submit application request in MyCG Ed and ETQC will coordinate with the Military to Mariner (M2M) program office to ensure eligibility. The M2M office will contact you to review policies, procedures, and options.

2. The National Maritime Center (NMC) has waived MMC fees for most active duty members. NMC - [National Maritime Center (NMC) Home Page (uscg.mil)](#)
NMC Policy Letter:

https://cg.portal.uscg.mil/units/forcecom/VCP/M2M%20Library/CG-MMC-Policy-Letter-02-20.pdf

3. IAW ALCOAST 177/22, Credentialing Assistance has been expanded to pay for training courses required for merchant mariner credentials. The training provider for M2M/MMC related training must be approved by the National Maritime Center (NMC) - https://www.dco.uscg.mil/nmc/training_assessments/

4. Submit training certificate of completion to ETQC.

5. For MMC questions, send message to CGM2M@USCG.MIL

K.   Credentialing Assistance Support.

1. ETQC Support. ETQC is available to assist members and ESOs with questions regarding MyCG Ed, processes, and procedures. ETQC authorizes CA requests and records completed credentials in Direct Access (DA) and the Joint Services Transcript (JST).

2. Inquiries. Inquiries should be sent to the primary customer service shared mailbox at ETQC-SMB@CGCOOL.MIL.

3. Credentials not on CG COOL. If a credential is not listed on the CG COOL website, send request to CGCOOL@USCG.MIL and include certification name and credentialing agency's website. The request will be evaluated and reviewed by the Joint COOL consortium to determine if the credential meets the DOD eligibility requirements.

4. Changes and Cancellations of the CA request. Notify ETQC as soon as possible with any changes or cancellations.

L. Preparation and Resources.

1. There are many credentials available that relate to members training and experience. Therefore, it is important to thoroughly research and determine how training, education, and experience relates to the credential being sought. When researching credentials, consider the following:

    a. Experience and background. Work experience and background may fulfill the requirements for the licensure/certification. While searching for a credential using CG COOL, note your rating, designator, collateral duty, out-of-rate assignment, and/or academic accomplishments. As you advance through your career, each advancement may relate to the subsequent level credential.

    b. Timing. Consider how long a credential might take to achieve as a part of your decision-making process. It is important to take into consideration that experience equates to time and some credentials may require you to earn and maintain a credential for a specific amount of time before you can apply for the next level. For example, a Journeyman electrician is required to serve an hourly equivalent of two years before the next credentialing level.

    c. Credentialing Eligibility. Each credentialing agency establishes their specific requirements (pre-requisites). These requirements include education, training, experience, etc. Carefully consider the required pre-requisites listed on the CG COOL site and ensure you have the required experience and training.

    d. Preparation Resources. There are many resources available to assist members with preparation and training:

        1. SkillPort. A leading commercial provider of on-demand training and e-learning solutions for global enterprises, government and education agencies. https://uscg.skillport.com/skillportfe/main.action#whatshappening

        2. Department of Labor O*Net. Detailed descriptions of the world-of-work for use by job seekers, workforce development and HR professionals, students, researchers, and more. https://www.onetonline.org/

        3. DoD MWR Library. Offers a vast array of study materials, books, and peer reviewed journal articles. https://www.navymwrdigitallibrary.org

        4. USMAP. The United Services Military Apprentice ship Program (USMAP) website provides active duty members of the Navy, Marines, Coast Guard, and Army with a streamlined ability to identify and register for Apprenticeships. https://usmap.netc.navy.mil/usmapss/static/index.htm

5. Career Path Decide. See pathway options based on your skills, interests, and values. Find apprenticeships, licenses, certificates, and degrees. https://www.dantes.doded.mil/EducationPrograms/PrepForCollege/CareerPathDecide.html

6. MilGears. MilGears helps service members connect their learning and experience to career and education opportunities. 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/

M. Additional Information and Important Reminders.

1. Meet with your Education Services Officer (ESO) to discuss career goals, options, resources, and to review your MilGears assessment.

2. If multiple fees are required for exams (application fee, books, exam), include all fees in the SAME application. Additionally, submit fees (and itemized receipts) on the OF-1164. Contact ETQC to add the additional fee(s) to the application if not included in the original submission.

3. Submit separate applications for training courses and exams. Select the appropriate choices in the CA application related to your request.

4. Books, Study Guides, Prep Materials should be entered with the exam fee. Submit itemized receipt(s) with the OF-1164 reflecting prep materials and exam fees.

5. Waivers: Send request to ETQC's shared mailbox (ETQC-SMB@CGCOOL.MIL) for review and consideration.

N. References.

1. National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) 2015, Section 551.

2. Coast Guard Voluntary Credentialing Program (VCP) Policy - COMDTINST 1540.10

3. Policy Update - ALCOAST 011/22

4. Policy Update - ALCOAST 177/22

Table M.1. Websites and Contacts

CG COOL Website	https://www.cool.osd.mil/uscg/
Questions about approved credentials and agencies displayed on CG COOL website	CGCOOL@USCG.MIL
Customer Service for ESOs and Members	ETQC-SMB-CGCOOL@USCG.MIL 757-756-5300
ETQC Portal Site	https://cg.portal.uscg.mil/units/forcecom/ETQC/credentialingsite/SitePages/Home.aspx
ETQC Public Site	https://www.forcecom.uscg.mil/Our-Organization/FORCECOM-UNITS/ETQC/Coast-Guard-Credentialing-Online-COOL/
Merchant Mariner (M2M) Portal	https://cg.portal.uscg.mil/units/forcecom/VCP/SitePages/Military%20to%20Mariner%20(M2M).aspx
Military- to- Mariner (M2M) Office	HQS-SMB-CGM2M@USCG.MIL
MilGears	https://milgears.osd.mil/
MyCG Ed Portal	https://myeducation.netc.navy.mil
Approved Training Courses	MMC Courses - https://www.dco.uscg.mil/nmc/training_assessments/ Dept of Veteran's Affairs - https://inquiry.vba.va.gov/weamspub/buildSearchInstitutionCriteria.do Dept of Labor Site - https://www.careeronestop.org/LocalHelp/EmploymentAndTraining/find-WIOA-training-programs.aspx