

Tuition Assistance Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

Disclaimer: The following FAQs serve only as a guide to assist members and commands with addressing questions related to Tuition Assistance and do not establish policy themselves. If you feel there is a discrepancy between the FAQs below and the current TA policy, please confirm with your ESO and then contact ETQC at ETQC-SMB-TAG@USCG.MIL

Getting Started

Q: How do I get Command/Supervisor approval to use Tuition Assistance (TA)?

A: Identify and speak with your unit's Education Services Officer (ESO). Every unit has its approval process. Your ESO will be able to help you understand the requirements at your unit, as well as establish realistic goals and timelines regarding course load.

You can locate your region's full-time ESO by scrolling down to the map on this link (CAC enabled): <https://cg.portal.uscg.mil/units/forcecom/ETQC/SitePages/VoLED%20Service%20Page.aspx>.

Q: TA Policy says I can apply for TA NLT 14 days before the course start date, but my ESO says the TA application must submit it earlier. Why?

A: The date you create your application and your course begins are NOT included in the 14-day submission rule. Members can submit TA applications 90 days before their course start date.

Your ESO may need a grace period to forward your application to ETQC. Weekends, holidays, leaves of absence, and intervention of technical difficulties should be considered.

ETQC may require more information about your request, so it is imperative to submit your application as early as possible to ensure the funding is received before or by your course start date.

Q: I don't like my school/program. Can I switch schools/programs at any time?

A: Yes. However, it is imperative to speak with your student advisor and your ESO regarding the pros and cons of abandoning your current school or field of study and timelines and course load requirements. Higher education is an elective privilege, but it should not interrupt your obligations as a service member.

If you switch schools/degrees, you must upload a revised degree plan into your MyCG Ed profile BEFORE requesting a TA for the new field of study. Additionally, ETQC needs to review and approve the new plan before you can apply.

Eligibility & Service Obligations

Q: The new TA policy states that eligible Civilians may use TA. Who are eligible Civilians?

A: Permanent Full and Part-Time Civilian employees who have completed 90 days of continuous Coast Guard service before their first request for TA.

Q: Do Enlisted Members have to obligate service if I use TA?

A: Enlisted AD & SELRES members have no service obligation for using TA, but members must complete all courses before their final day on AD.

Officers and Civilians DO have a service obligation for using TA.

Q: Do Officers have service obligations?

Yes, Active Duty Officers agree to serve two years upon course completion, and Reserve Officers agree to serve four years. The obligated service runs concurrently with any other service obligation that is incurred. The obligation begins on the final day of the last course using TA. The term of service obligation is (2) years for AD Officers and (4) years for SELRES Officers.

If an Active Duty Officer RELADs into SELRES, the debt will run concurrently.

Q: I am a CG Civilian and a CG SELRES member, am I able to use both?

Unfortunately, no. TA is limited to \$4500 per FY.

Q: Can you explain the Civilian service obligation?

A: The requirement is (1) month for every (1) credit hour.

Example: A 3-credit course will require three months of pay-back service obligation. If the course ends on 26 July, you are obligated into service until 26 October, and you must complete the entire pay period.

Q: If I transition from AD to SELRES, am I allowed to continue to use TA?

A: Yes. If you are already in a course, it needs to conclude before your final day on AD. You will need to submit supporting documentation that proves you have orders for a Reserve billet. ETQC will modify your MyCG Ed profile to reflect your Reserve status.

If you have already transitioned from AD to SELRES and are drilling but haven't been using TA, you must also upload your Reserve Point Statement.

ETQC may need additional supporting documentation from the In-Service Transit Team to process the request. <https://www.dcms.uscg.mil/Portals/10/CG-1/PPC/PPPM/TTP/3PM%20TTP%20-%20Chapter%203.pdf>

Debt, Changes, & Cancelations

Q: If I'm discharged from the Coast Guard before my course(s) ends, do I have to pay back TA? If so, how much will I have to pay?

A: Yes. Members will be required to repay the total amount invoiced for the course(s). However, TA may waive repayment for members involuntarily separated by Reason of Convenience of the Government OR are separated/retired by reason of physical disability, illness, injury, or other impairment incurred in the line of duty. Exceptions: Misconduct & Hardship discharge.

Q: If I withdrew from a class after the deadline, how do I settle that debt with the Coast Guard?

A: Members with TA debt will now be able to pay via E-Billing. Members can also elect to have the debt taken from their pay via form DD-139 Pay Adjustment Authorization.

Note: PPC makes the final determination of the installment amount per pay period.

An email of indebtedness notification will be sent by an electronic service called "sfly" OR by an ETQC auditor. Two days after the initial notification, the member will receive an email containing specific debt settlement instructions for E-Billing via <https://www.pay.gov>. The pay.gov link is specific to the member, and only a debit card or Pay Pal account may be used to submit the full payment. Pay.gov will not accept credit cards. The E-Bill method is only valid for 45 days from the issue date. If another link needs to be requested, please submit a ticket via the issue tracker in MyCG Ed.

Q: What do I do if my university changes/cancel my course?

A: You need to notify your ESO when the school confirms your course is changing or canceled.

If a school cannot fulfill seat requirements for one course, they will often arrange for you to start another on your degree plan. You may request a correction to your Authorized TA voucher for the course you intend to take instead. In any event of change or cancelation, you need to notify your ESO, and they will communicate with ETQC to alter/cancel your voucher.

Note: It is imperative that you take an active role in communicating schedule/course changes so that you do not incur debt or receive any requests for grades regarding courses you did not take.

FY22 Funding Changes

Q: Is the TA allowance of \$4,500 only valid for 2022? Will it stay the same or change again in 2023 (and beyond)?

A: There is never a guarantee of funding, but the intent is that the current TA cap of \$4,500 will remain. Things are subject to change as future funding decisions are made, so it is imperative to check the current TA Policy for the Fiscal Year (FY) and any additional messages related to government funding.

Note: FY changes occur each October.

Q: I reached the previous TA cap of \$3,750, so I paid out-of-pocket for the additional course(s). Can I get reimbursed because the cap has now increased to \$4,500?

A: No. There is no provision in TA Policy or the Performance, Training, and Education Manual (COMDTINST M1500.10C) to allow member reimbursement for out-of-pocket tuition costs. TA MUST be requested in advance for coverage.

Enlisted members may be eligible for the annual Coast Guard Foundation Education Grant (CGFEG). Members are encouraged to speak with their ESO or visit ETQC's Portal site for information about the grant.

<https://cg.portal.uscg.mil/units/forcecom/ETQC/VoluntaryEducationpage/SitePages/Home.aspx>

Q: Did credit hour funding limits increase for TA as well?

A: No. Individual funding caps remain at \$250 per Semester hour, \$166.67 per Quarter-hour, and \$16.67 per Clock hour. Any tuition costs beyond the caps will be listed as a student share on the TA voucher.

Q: My school has several fees, am I allowed to claim them with the tuition rate?

A: Unfortunately, no, Tuition Assistance only covers the cost of the tuition. You may be able to request reimbursement of fees through the CGMA SEG Grant.

CGMA | Education Programs (cgmahq.org)

Q: Can I submit my TA applications for the fiscal year (FY)?

A: TA applications may be submitted up to 90 days in advance of the course start date.

Note: Funding is not always available at the turn of the FY. It is imperative to monitor the Federal government's actions regarding the budget and any Continuing Resolution(s) (CR). When ETQC is processing TA requests during times of CR, applications will be reviewed and processed in the order received. Applications may be reviewed and placed in a forward status (FW) if they fall beyond the limits of the CR. Forward status does not mean denial. It is a hold status, and the application will show as "under review."

Q: Am I allowed to use FASFA and tuition assistance?

A: Yes, all service members and civilians are encouraged to fill out the FASFA application. You do not have to take out education loans to be eligible for the Pell Grant.

Federal Pell Grant Program

Q: Are there any other free or low-cost options to earn credit?

DANTES is the military service program "umbrella" that makes these low-cost and free exams possible.

DSST and CLEP are free college-level examination programs available to military members. Members study until they believe they are proficient and then register to take the exam. If they achieve the minimum required score, credit is awarded.

DSST offers a few upper-level (junior and senior) credit requirements, while CLEP examinations only fulfill lower-level credit requirements.

JST is your official military transcript that provides academic credit for training and experience while serving in the military. If you need assistance with your JST, you can reach out to the CG Registrar Services, and they will assist.

Degrees, Certificates, & Vocational Program Funding

Q: The new TA policy says I can get a second associate's or bachelor's degree. Can I get both?

A: Current TA policy allows for an additional degree at the same level as your current degree for both Associate and Bachelor's levels. This is without regard to how/when the first degree was earned. In total, you may use TA to fund 2 Associate Degrees, 2 Bachelor's Degrees, and 2 Academic Certificates.

You may still seek a bachelor's degree after using TA for an Associate's level degree. Or for a master's after completing your Bachelor's program.

Q: I am only a few courses away from my Master's degree. If I finish, am I still eligible for the Associate or Bachelor's level degrees and the (2) Certificates?

A: With the new TA policy, you can pursue multiple degrees at the same level. The exception to this is a Master's degree. You can earn 2 Associate's degrees, 2 bachelor's degrees, and 2 academic certificates at either the graduate or undergraduate level, regardless of how you earned the degrees.

For example, you may never have earned an associate's and have a conferred Bachelor's degree. In this case, you'd be able to pursue 2 Associate's degrees.

You may have a conferred Master's degree but never earned a Bachelor's degree. In this case, you'd be able to pursue 2 Bachelor's Degrees.

Q: I have a bachelor's degree. Can I use TA for an undergrad Certificate?

A: TA can be used for (2) Academic Certificates in addition to (2) Associate or (2) Bachelor's degrees.

TA will cover (2) Academic Certificates at either graduate or undergraduate levels. The school granting the academic certificates must have a signed DOD MOU as a reminder. The credits must be in semester, quarter, or clock hours. Unfortunately, TA may not be used for professional development or continuing education credits.

Note: The school granting the Certificate(s) MUST have a signed DOD MOU.

Q: If my Bachelor's degree is in one field of study, do I have to use TA for a Master's in the same field?

A: No.

Note: TA may not cover pre-requisite courses unless a waiver request has been submitted to and approved by ETQC.

(CAC Enabled) ETQC - Tuition Waiver (uscg.mil)

Q: In what cases will TA cover Pre-requisites?

A: A member with sufficient cause can apply for a waiver. The waiver template and instructions are available on ETQC's portal page.

<https://cg.portal.uscg.mil/units/forcecom/ETQC/VoluntaryEducationpage/SitePages/Home.aspx>

Q: Will TA cover the pre-requisites needed for the CG PA program?

A member completing a Bachelor's degree in Healthcare Administration wants to apply for the CG PA program. In this situation, the member searches on TA Career Decide for an Academic Certificate Program in Pre-Health. As it goes toward a degree, this qualifies for TA, and the credits are transferrable.

In some cases, a letter from the University student advisor (with courses identified) can suffice as a temporary degree plan. A letter from the school that intends to accept these credits is also required.

Q: I have a master's degree. Can I get a second?

A: No. Current policy does not support a second master's degree. However, the option to request a waiver of this policy is available. ETQC will consider these waivers on a case-by-case basis, and there is no guarantee of approval.

Q: Can I use TA to pay for vocational classes? Can I take them outside of a college?

A: TA can only be used through institutions with a signed DOD MOU. The classes must carry toward a degree to qualify for Tuition Assistance.

However, there are opportunities through CG COOL to receive Credentialing Assistance. This is separate from TA.

<https://www.dodmou.com/>

Q: I see conflicting information. The current TA Policy says one thing, but the Performance, Training, and Education Manual (COMDTINST M1500.10C) says another. Which is correct?

A: The current policy can be found in the latest ALCOAST released. COMDTINST M1500.10C is awaiting updates for publication. Please reach out to your local ESO or ETQC if you still have questions.

Q: Do I have to report my degrees if I didn't use TA to get them?

A: Yes. Anyone wishing to use TA MUST report all degree conferrals to ETQC. Any applicant found guilty of concealing ownership of a degree may be subject to punishment IAW the UCMJ and will be required to repay the total amount authorized.

[Degree Reporting \(uscg.mil\)](#)

Other:

Q: Is there a way to submit a waiver for tuition assistance and policy?

Under special circumstances, ETQC may grant a waiver to TA policies and procedures. However, waivers are situational and will only be considered on a case-by-case basis, on their merit and individual circumstances. Before requesting a waiver through ETQC, service members must exhaust all avenues with the academic institution. Do not submit a waiver to the Navy.

(CAC Enabled) [ETQC - Tuition Waiver \(uscg.mil\)](#)

Q: Am I required to maintain a certain GPA while using TA?

A: Yes, for undergraduate, you must maintain a 2.0 GPA, and for graduate degrees, you must have a 3.0 GPA. If your tuition assistance usage does not meet those thresholds, ETQC may request that you submit an unofficial transcript showing the updated GPA.

Q: When would I have to repay classes?

A: If you do not earn a B or higher for graduate-level classes or C or higher for undergraduate, you will be required to repay TA.

Q: I am currently enrolled in the Us Naval Community College Program am I able to use TA at the same time?

A: Yes, you can be enrolled at the US Naval Community College and take classes using Tuition Assistance at the same time. [United States Naval Community College \(usncc.edu\)](http://usncc.edu)