Coast Guard COOL
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Contact Info

Contact the Education and Training Quota Management Command's (ETQC) voluntary credentialing 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 (https://www.cool.osd.mil/uscg/index.htm) lists all available credentials a service member can pursue.
- The CG COOL website is updated on a regular basis.

What if the credential I want to earn is not on CG COOL?

- If a credential is not listed on CG COOL or any other COOL website, submit a request to CGCOOL@USCG.MIL to include certification name and credentialing agency's website.

What if I receive approval, then the credential is removed from the COOL website, can I still pursue the credential if it was already approved by ETQC?

- Yes. If the request is authorized by ETQC in MyCG ED, then the credential will be reimbursed.

Coverage

What if I have a previously earned credential, will CA cover the renewal, membership, or fees associated with the previously earned credential?

- Yes, ETQC will fund the renewal/membership fees as long as it's your one credential request for the fiscal year.

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

- No, a member must receive approval from ETQC prior to paying for any type of fee(s).
- Additional funding may be available on: 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 before submitting a credentialing assistance request to ensure they meet the credentialing agency's requirements.

Does CA cover preparation and training material?

- No. CA will not cover preparation and training materials. The CG Portal and public sites list available preparation resources.
- CA does not cover courses, training, study guides, etc.

Given that members are reimbursed for "one credential", does that cover all of those fees required for the credential?

- Yes. All (required) fees should be submitted on same application in MyCG Ed. Some applications will have multiple fees for one credential. All required fees should be entered in the "authorized amount" field on the application in MyCG Ed to receive full reimbursement.

Credentialing Basics

What is the official policy document for Coast Guard COOL (Credentialing Assistance)?

- COMDTINST 1540.10 (10 Jan 2020)

Is the one credential based upon Calendar Year or Fiscal Year?

- CA is based on Fiscal Year (1 October – 30 September)

Are there any lifetime credit maximums or annual caps?

- No. However, CA is funded on a first come first served basis and only one per fiscal year.

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

- Yes. ETQC will follow the established year-end guidelines for financial obligations which is typically in August.

What is the current funding for the VCP?

- The VCP budget for FY20 is $500,000.

What will happen if there is no longer funding for CA?

- 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.
- Tuition Assistance and Credentialing Assistance are two separate pots of money

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

- The Credentialing Assistance (CA) program is for certifications and licensures earned through state/local/public/private organizations and agencies.
- TA does not fund credentials listed on the CG COOL website. Academic certificates are funded by TA and earned at eligible colleges/universities.

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

- The ESO and ETQC will verify eligibility in Direct Access.
- In the event your "Person Profile" in Direct Access is missing information, you may be requested to submit additional documentation to verify eligibility.
- Note: Completed degrees/certificates/certifications must be reported and entered in Direct Access.

Can member apply for credential that's out of rating if CG work experience supports?

- Yes. That is an option for the Service member on the application form. On the application drop down, they would select "credentialing request relates to my out of rate assignment".

What if SELRES member has a different civilian occupation than rating? Can they apply for a certification tied to their civilian occupation?

- Yes. On the application drop down, they would click on "career".

How do I apply for Credentialing Assistance?

Follow the 5 Easy Steps:
1. Find and Select Related Credentials
2. Request Approval via MyCG Ed
3. Pay for approved fees
4. Get your credential
5. Report results

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

- 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 at ETQC-SMB-CGCOOL@USCG.MIL with the supporting documentation

Reporting Results

Do I have to report the exam results to ETQC?

- Yes. IAW COMDTINST 1540.10, submit exam results (pass/fail) within 90 calendar days of initial CA authorization (upload in MyCG Ed or email to ETQC). Submit copy of credential within 30 calendar days of credential attainment (upload in MyCG Ed or email to ETQC).
- ETQC will enter the earned credential into Direct Access and Joint Service Transcript.

Reimbursement and Repayment

How will I know my valid receipt and OF-1164 was submitted for reimbursement?

- ETQC will forward the request and all supporting documentation to CG FINANCE Center within 3 business days of receiving the completed documents.

The member pays for fees and then requests reimbursement? This is opposite of tuition assistance. Who will be reimbursed…the member or institution?

- The CA program is a different process than TA. After receiving approval/authorization in MyCG Ed, the member must pay the fees first and then submit receipt and OF-1164 to be reimbursed.

Do I request reimbursement after each fee or do I do it after all have been completed?

- You can only apply once per year, so you should include all fees associated with the one credential in one application

Do I need to repay CA if I do not pass?

- No. You do not need to repay CA; however you will not be able to use CA for the same credential again or pursue another one in the same fiscal year.
  You are eligible for reimbursement if you do not pass the exam.

If I fail the exam, can I apply for CA for the same credential in the next FY?

- No. If you do not pass the exam (and receive reimbursement), you are not eligible to request CA for same credential next FY.

If I fail the exam, is that my one credential for the year even if I didn't attain the credential?

- Yes. If you received reimbursement, then that is your one credential for the fiscal year regardless if you failed or not.

Is there a waiver process for CA in the event that the member will not be able to complete all requirements?

- Submit waiver request to ETQC for review and consideration. Information can be found on ETQC's portal page.

What if I applied for a credential and it crossed FY, what year does it count for?

- It counts toward the FY the obligation was made.

Will the program only reimburse for CG$ logos?

- Any credentials listed on CG COOL can be reimbursed. Members may request that a credential be added to CG COOL by writing the CG COOL mailbox CGCOOL@uscg.mil

What if a credential requires an additional fee down the line, such as 6 months later, but it was not included in the initial CA application, will it be covered?

- It may be considered for reimbursement, though Service members should look "down the line" for anticipated costs before submitting a CA request.

Eligibility

Who is eligible for CA?

- CA is available to eligible Enlisted Members and SELRES.
- CA is not currently available for Officers - VCP is currently preforming gap analysis for Officers and Warrant Officers to be added to the CG COOL website, though there are no current plans to fund credentials for them.
- CA is not available for civilians/spouses at this time. There are currently no plans to support civilian credentials.

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

- Yes. 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 anniversary year and have met the participation standards for the previous anniversary year are eligible.

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Are there any specific eligibility requirements for CA?

- Voluntary credentialing is only available to enlisted personnel.
- SELRES members who meet partition standards including current readiness metrics for the previous 12 months. A point statement will need to be uploaded into MyCG Ed.
- Service members must be in compliance with Weight and Body Fat Standards
- Marked "Ready" or "Not Ready" on Enlisted Employee Reviews
- Members must have at least 6 months remaining on their service obligation

Are there any disqualifiers for CA?

- Service members with any misconduct, to include court-martial punishment, judicial punishment, non-judicial punishment within the last 12 months.
- Service members must not be awaiting a punitive discharge, in confinement, on appellate leave, or awaiting administrative separation
- Service members convicted by foreign or domestic courts, serving sentences in foreign prisons, or administrative vice punitive discharges will be deemed ineligible for CA.

Military to Mariner (M2M)

Will M2M office reach out to member after the request is made or do they need to reach out separately?

- Either way. Members can reach out to M2M directly, or ETQC will reach out on their behalf after the application is command approved by the ESO in MyCG Ed

I would like to pursue a Military to Mariner Credential, are there any additional steps?

- Yes. It is a coordinated effort between ETQC and the M2M team to receive approval.
- M2M wants to ensure successful completion and provide additional guidance before ETQC authorizes the application in MyCG Ed.

If a member has a merchant mariner credential that they would like to renew, will that cost be covered?

- Yes

Does this program cover TWIC fees as it is a requirement for attaining the license?

- Yes, however the TWIC is not very expensive (~$100) and service members can only pursue one per FY. Members may want to save their one credential for a more expensive one.

Credentialing Resources

Where can I find more information about VCP and the CA process?

- CG COOL website (https://www.cool.osd.mil/uscg/index.htm)

- ETQC portal page (https://cg.portal.uscg.mil/units/forcecom/ETQC/SitePages/Home.aspx)

- VCP Policy: COMDTINST 1540.10
  https://cg.portal.uscg.mil/units/forcecom/ETQC/Documents/Document%20Links/COMDINST1540.10.pdf

- ALCOAST Commandant Notice (ACN) announcing the promulgation of VCP Policy
  https://cg.portal.uscg.mil/units/forcecom/ETQC/Documents/Document%20Links/ACN%20008-20.txt

ESO Guidance

With the 14 day deadline, should ESOs add extra time into their own timeline, to ensure we process it before that 14 days?

- It is highly advised to build additional time with these requests.

How long does it typically take ETQC to authorize the request?

- 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 M2M credential, it could take longer for final authorization.

Will ESOs be required to separate have a memo generated for signing as a command approver?

- No. As long as they are designated as ESOs, they are eligible to approve the request.