

TA/CA Policy Change FAQs

(As of: 11 Dec 2024)

EFFECTIVE DATE:

Q: When will the new policy changes become effective?

A: The new policy is effective 0001 hrs ET, 11 December 2024.

TUITION ASSISTANCE:

Q1. What is the Tuition Assistance program?

A: The Army's Tuition Assistance (TA) Program provides financial assistance for voluntary off-duty civilian education programs in support of a Soldier's professional and personal self-development goals.

Q2. Who is eligible for Tuition Assistance?

A: Active duty, National Guard, and Reserve Soldiers who meet qualifying standards. Commissioned officers incur a service obligation if they use TA.

Q3. Why did the Army make these changes to TA?

A: We looked at the Voluntary Education (VOLED) program holistically – TA and CA are both part of VOLED. We wanted to bring the Army into closer alignment with the other Services and this policy change does that. These changes also help ensure the long-term stability of VOLED programs and maximize benefits for Soldiers based on available funding.

Q4. Will Tuition Assistance always be available?

A: TA will be available if there is funding for voluntary education programs. The TA program depends on approved budgets and/or continuing resolutions. If either the Army, ARNG, or USAR reaches their budget limit for the FY, the program will be temporarily suspended for that component.

Q5. What happens when a Soldier fails to meet course standards with an acceptable grade?

A: The Army recoups the cost of the course if a Soldier receives an unsuccessful grade.

Q6. How much does Tuition Assistance pay towards semester hours?

A: With this policy change, the Army will pay for up to 18 semester hours a fiscal year. The semester hour cap remains at \$250 per semester hour.

Q7. Do Soldiers get \$4500 for TA and \$4500 for CA each year?

A: The Fiscal Year (FY) annual cap per Soldier is \$4500 TOTAL for TA and CA combined. (CA limit is \$2000 per FY). This is an increase from \$4000 and 16 semester hours per year.

Q8. What if the Academic Institution is only \$175 per semester hour, can a Soldier exceed the 18 semester hours since there will be money remaining in annual allotment?

A: No. The semester hour cap is 18 per fiscal year.

Q9. What if an Academic Institution charges \$300 per semester hour?

A: Tuition Assistance will cover \$250 per semester hour and the remaining \$50 per semester hour would be the responsibility of the Soldier.

Q10. Must a Soldier complete ArmyIgnitED 101 Training if they have already utilized TA or CA?

A: No, this training is only for first time users of TA and CA.

Q11. Must a Soldier complete Career Path Decide (CPD) prior to using TA if they have already utilized TA previously?

A. No, CPD is only required for first time users of TA; however, Soldiers are highly encouraged to complete the tool and meet with an education counselor in their education office to help plan their education journey.

Q12. Where do I find Career Path Decide?

A. Though there are links to Career Path Decide within ArmyIgnitED when a Soldier attempts to utilize TA for the first time, Soldiers can also go to <https://careerpathdecide.org/>.

Q13. I am a Soldier who has an approved 3 SH TA request (TAR) for a January 2025 course where I previously used 15 SH. That approved request has 1 SH covered by TA and I am student funding the remaining 2 SHs. Once the policy changes take effect and the 2 additional SHs become available can my Ed Center edit my TAR or create an HTAR to get the remaining 2 SHs covered by TA?

A. No. Ed Centers should not modify TARs that have already been requested and approved and HTARs will not be approved for this situation. A Soldier who wishes to have the full three SHs described in this situation for a course that starts in January should cancel the approved TAR and create a new TAR for the same class and it will now be fully funded.

CREDENTIALING ASSISTANCE:

Q1. What is the Credentialing Assistance program?

A. The Army Credentialing Assistance Program provides funds to support Soldiers in pursuing voluntary credentials. CA is a voluntary, off-duty program that directly contributes to improving Total Army readiness, supporting Soldiers' professional development, retaining quality Soldiers, and preparing Soldiers for meaningful employment upon transition from military service.

Q2. Who is eligible for Credentialing Assistance?

A. Active Duty, National Guard, and Reserve Soldiers who meet qualifying standards. There is no service obligation incurred when using CA.

Q3. Why did the Army make these changes to CA?

A. The Credentialing Assistance program is a very successful program, but the cost of the program was exceeding the FY authorization. The Army determined it was necessary to implement changes to ensure long term sustainability of the program.

Q4. If I submitted a CAR for FY25 prior to the policy change that does not start until after the policy change and exceeds the new policy change funding limits will it be approved?

A. Yes. CARs submitted for FY25 prior to policy change will be approved under the terms and conditions of CA that existed at the time of submission and will be subject to the prior policy funding limit of \$4000.

Q5. Will CA always be available?

A. As with TA, CA will be available if there is funding for voluntary education programs. The CA program depends on approved budgets and/or continuing resolutions. If either the Army, ARNG, or USAR reach their budget limit for the FY, the program will be temporarily suspended for that component.

Q6. How many credentials can I get?

A. Soldiers may receive funding for 3 credentials for every 10 years of service. This new limit is a change from the previous policy that did not limit the number of credentials based on years of service.

Q7. How much does credentialing assistance pay for attainment of a credential?

A. With this policy change, the Army will pay up to \$2000 for one credential per year. In addition, there is a \$1000 FY funding limit for private pilot related aviation credentials for all Soldiers, regardless of component. This is a decrease from the previous policy of \$4000 per year for unlimited credentials; to include private pilot related aviation credentials for the ARNG and USAR but is aligned with how the other Services execute their programs.

Q8. Must a Soldier complete MilGears prior to using CA if they have already utilized CA previously?

A. No. MilGears is only required for first time users of CA, however, Soldiers are highly encouraged to complete the tool and meet with an education counselor in their education office or have a discussion with a CA Virtual Counselor found in Army COOL to help plan their education journey.

Q9. Where do I find MilGears?

A. Though there are links to MilGears within ArmyIgnitED when a Soldier attempts to submit a Goal for the first time, Soldiers can also go to <https://milgears.osd.mil/>.

Q10. Why is the Army now requiring me to take the exam for the credential?

A. The intent of the program is to earn the credential which requires taking the exam. This is a change from the previous policy that allowed Soldiers to receive funding for the training but were not required to take the exam.

Q11. I am a Soldier with less than 10 years of service and have 3 active education goals that I am pursuing. These are counting against my lifetime limits and now an exam is required, but there is no exam available-what do I do?

A. Unfortunately, you will have to wait until the exam is added or pay out of pocket.

Q12. Do recertifications count towards the lifetime limit?

A. No. recertifications do not count toward the lifetime limits but do subtract from the FY funding limit.

Q13. Can I recertify two credentials in the same FY?

A. Yes, if you do not exceed your FY funding limit.

Q14. If a Soldier fails training for a credential but passes the exam, will they be recouped?

A. If a Soldier fails the training for a credential, they will be recouped the government cost of the training regardless of if they take the exam and pass or not.

Q15. If a Soldier passes the training for a credential but fails the exam, what will the Soldier be recouped?

A. If a Soldier passes the training for a credential but fails the exam, they will only be recouped the government cost of the exam.

Q16. What if a Soldier completes the training for a Credential and decides they do not want to pursue the exam?

A. Soldiers must complete the exam if they complete training. A Soldier has 180 days from a passing grade being posted for training to request the associated exam. If Soldiers do not request exam, they will be recouped for the costs of the training and associated materials.

Q17. If a Soldier fails training for a credentialing goal and is recouped, does that count in their 3 per 10 year limit?

A. No. it will revert to the original number of credentials per 10 years.

Q18. If a Soldier successfully completes training towards a goal but fails the exam, does that count towards their 3 per 10 year limit?

A. Yes. Once a Soldier is recouped the funds for the exam, the number of credentials will remain the same since the goal is still being pursued and has a completed training against it. If the Soldier has remaining FY funding available, they may submit another CAR to attempt to pass the failed exam after the recoupment is processed.

Q19. I have 18 years of service and have completed 5 credentials already; does it mean I am not allowed to use CA funds anymore?

A. Soldiers receive 3 credentials per every 10 years. A Soldier with 18 years of service and 5 credentials is still eligible for 1 additional credential if the Soldier completes the CA request for training and exam within 31 days of their ETS date.

Q20. How long is a CA Education Goal good in ArmyIgnitED?

A. CA created Ed Goals remain active as long as there is training and or exam funds requested/obligated with a CA Request (CAR) towards the goal. If a CA Request (CAR) has not been made associated with the Ed Goal within 90 days of creation, the Ed Goal will be deleted.

Q21: If I requested and completed 6 CA requests (CARs) for training, and I have 18 years in service, am I still eligible for CA funds?

A. This question is dependent upon the 6 CA requests. If these are 6 completed goals (meaning, the Soldier completed all 6 exams and earned those credentials within 18 years), the Soldier will have to wait until 20 years to receive 3 more goals. If a Soldier completed 6 CA training requests towards a single ed goal, they would still have 5 goals remaining. A CA request does not mean a goal has been completed, so it's important to understand the difference. With 18 years in service, the Soldier may still request funding for a credential they are working towards until the credential is earned.

Q22. If a Soldier has an ed goal from a previous FY and completed training but did not take the exam, are they eligible to take the exam in current FY and still use CA for a new goal in current FY?

A. Yes. Prior years' ed goals with funding against them remain in ArmyIgnitED. Soldiers can pursue the exams related to those goals. Those previous goals will count towards the 3 in 10 years with or without the exams. They can still create 1 current year ed goal if total amount spent towards both CA goals does not exceed annual limit of \$2000.

Q23. How can I take the exam for an Aviation license when it requires multiple lengthy trainings/years to complete?

A. In this situation, contact the Army Credentialing Assistance Program Office (ACAPO) within ArmyIgnitED (using the Credentialing Assistance (CA) Office category), so they can adjust your account to allow for multiple training requests before the exam.

Q24. I have completed multiple trainings for my aviation credential and am ready to take my exam to meet the new requirement, but none are available for funding- Do I pay out of pocket to take the exam?

A. Yes. You will have to pay out of pocket unless there is an approved CA vendor that offers the exam.

Q25. The training and exam for my Ed Goal total \$1,200, what can I use my remaining annual limit on?

A. Soldiers have \$2000 per FY to pursue one credential, which includes training, books/materials, fees, and exam. CA cannot split costs on exams, books, or materials. In this scenario, the Soldier will still have \$800 to use for recertification if applicable, or to utilize to take the exam for a previous year Ed Goal that already has funding against it but nothing else can be pursued after this for a different credential.

Q26: If I am not applying for funding for an aviation credential, does the \$1000 limit does this apply to me?

A: No, the \$1000 FY funding limit only applies to aviation credentials. All other credentials fall under the \$2000 FY funding limit.

Q27. I entered service in 2020 and I haven't used CA. I want to pursue a credential. Am I still eligible for 3 credentials?

A. Yes. Soldiers can pursue 3 credentials per 10 years of service retroactive to a Soldiers BASD. After 10 years, the limit will change to 6, allowing the Soldier to pursue 3 more.

Q28. I have 15 yrs of service and never used CA, how many credentials am I allowed?

A. Six. Soldiers can pursue 3 credentials per 10 years of service retroactive to a Soldiers BASD. Soldiers may only request 1 Ed Goal per FY and not exceed annual limit of \$2000 for non-private pilot related credentials and a maximum of \$1000 for private pilot related credentials.

Q29. Where can I find the list of aviation related credentials that are limited to \$1000?

A. When you begin to submit your CA Request, each aviation credential that is limited to \$1000 will have a note indicating this when you select it.

Q30. What if I submitted an FY25 CAR prior to the policy change that exceeds the new reduced policy funding limit of \$2000?

A. CARS submitted prior to the policy change will be approved up to the previous funding limit of \$4000. In this scenario, the Soldier would then be done using CA for the FY.

Q31. What if the exam associated with my desired CA Ed Goal cost more than \$2000?

A. If an exam exceeds the annual CA funding limit of \$2000, please reach out to a Credentialing Counselor at <https://coolcontactus.com/ContactUs?service=R&subject=R> to discuss available options such as alternate vendors and/or goals.

Q32. If I have already obtained 3 credentials with CA but have only been in the service for 8 years, when am I able to use CA again?

A. You are eligible for 3 credentials for every 10 years of service (based on your BASD). You are eligible for three additional credentials at 10 years and one day of service.

Q33. If I submitted a CAR prior to Dec 11th for a training or exam that starts after policy changes and it has not been approved yet, is it subject to new policy limits/restrictions or previous policy?

A. Training and Exam CARs submitted prior to Dec 11th with start dates after policy change will be grandfathered (subject to annual funding limit in place on day of submittal). However, if the cost of that CAR meets or exceeds the new annual funding limit in place on or after 11 Dec, no other FY25 CARs will be approved and paid.