

## **ACES GOARMYED LETTER OF INSTRUCTION RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ACADEMIC INSTITUTION**

GoArmyEd has centralized and streamlined management of the Army's TA program and reduced the workload of participating institutions by implementing the following processes and tools:

- Centralized/automated invoice processes eliminate the need to submit paper invoices with paper TA forms to as many as 180 different education centers; invoices are paid promptly and can be tracked by participating institutions.
- Electronic batch processing of registration and withdrawal requests eliminate paper TA forms.
- Web-based grading tool provides participating institutions one location to enter grades directly into the portal rather than to geographically dispersed education centers.
- Electronic data collection tool allows participating institutions to upload and maintain course and term schedule data for multiple Army installations; online integrated course schedules are visible Army-wide.
- Centralized Customer Relationship Management (CRM)/Broadcast Message provides tools for communication/problem resolution with your Army students.

For participating institutions to realize these benefits and for the Army to manage its program more efficiently and effectively, participating schools are asked to adopt the processes described in this instruction. Existing Memoranda of Understanding/Agreements, Tri-Services contracts or other contracts that institutions may have with military installations and Army Continuing Education System (ACES) remain in place and should be supplemented with this instruction. All Letter of Instruction (LOI) schools must be signatories to the Department of Defense Memorandum of Understanding (DOD MOU).

### **A. Program Management**

The institution will:

1. Identify one official who is empowered to direct and coordinate resources at the institution for the overall management of all work required under this Letter of Instruction (LOI). In addition, the institution will identify technical staff familiar with File Transfer Protocol (FTP)-client software and use of flat-file-formatted data templates.
2. Send at least one representative to online and telephonic meetings/training and, if possible, to in-person conferences at the institution's own expense. In-person conferences will be scheduled and coordinated in advance, as needed. This representative will ensure transfer of information to other institutional staff associated with ACES programs and services.
3. Complete the institutional on-boarding survey with required institutional data elements and functional points of contact and return to the Technical Integrator by the due date provided.
4. Use ACES portal web-based training modules and integrated help tools to train institution personnel on use of the ACES portal. Web-training will need to be

completed by the institution's designated system users prior to the ACES established deadline.

## **B. Data Management**

The institution will:

1. Develop an interface (via secure FTP flat-file exchange) between the institution's systems and the ACES portal for the purpose of timely exchange of data. The Technical Integrator will provide specifications for the flat files through comprehensive training modules and workflow instructions. Development of interfaces to automate uploading/downloading of flat file extracts between the institution's student information system and the portal is not required. Those institutions with a high volume of Soldier enrollments, however, may wish to automate such interfaces in order to minimize manual processing of these flat files.
2. Initiate all transactions through the ACES portal. The ACES portal and the systems that comprise it are the "system of record" for all Army decision-making transactions, financial or otherwise, involving the program. The institution remains the source of record for the Soldier's official academic transcript.
3. Receive via secure FTP a flat file containing demographic information for Soldiers who have requested admission into one of the institution's degree plans. Institutions may reject the application if the Soldier does not meet the institution's admissions requirements.
4. Ensure the integrity and the accuracy of the transaction data.
5. Meet all deadlines and data format requirements for exchanging data. Changes to school student administration systems are not required for these data exchanges. These data exchanges may include, but are not limited to, the following areas:
  - Common Application Data
  - Course Catalog Data
  - Course Material Information
  - Class Schedule Data
  - Course Enrollments
  - Course Rejections
  - Course Confirmations
  - Course Drops/Withdrawals
  - Grade Data
  - Documented Degree Plan or Student Agreement (SA) Student Data
  - Graduation Data
  - Soldiers within Six Semester Hours of Graduating
  - Invoicing Data
  - Course Size
  - Degree Map Template Data

### C. Degree Map/Term Schedule Data Collection

The institution will:

1. Work with SOC and the Technical Integrator to complete the initial on-boarding process required to offer Soldier access to course enrollment through the ACES portal:
  - a. Offer class enrollment for Soldiers through the ACES portal. Army Tuition Assistance (TA) policy will fund only those degree programs and courses that qualify for pre-approved, reimbursable TA per AR 621-5, DoD Directive 1322.8, and DoD Directive 1322.25.
  - b. Provide detailed degree maps using a standard template to document the courses required to fulfill degree and certificate requirements. The institution must submit this template by the established deadline. To use the FTP course data upload process, a school would be required to develop a flat file extract from their student administration system in accordance with file specifications that will be provided by the Technical Integrator. The web-based tool does not require any development from the institution.
  - c. Use either the standardized web-based tool provided by the ACES portal or the FTP course data upload to enter course catalog information during the ACES established course catalog information upload window.
  - d. Work with SOC and the Technical Integrator to validate degree map set-up in the ACES portal during the ACES established degree map set-up window.
  - e. Submit class term schedule data, tuition, and class fees using either the standardized web-based tool or the FTP class data upload. Note that there will be a minimum two-day lag time between when the class information is submitted and the date they appear in the integrated catalog, potentially longer for on-post classes. This is due to the requirement for Education Services Officer (ESO) approval of on-post classes. Class term schedule data may include the following: section number, location, class size, registration open and close dates, class start and end dates, delivery mode, titles, descriptions, credits, level (lower-division, upper-division, graduate), prerequisites, syllabi (as requested), required course materials, and other attributes. Class attributes may include the following: academic calendars start dates, end dates, withdrawal/refund deadlines, school-specific section numbers, web addresses and other attributes. To use the FTP class upload process a school would be required to develop a flat file extract from their student administration system in accordance with file specifications that will be provided by the Technical Integrator. The web-based tool does not require any development from the institution.
  - f. Certify the accuracy of all data submissions to the term schedule when submitted through the data-collection tool.
  - g. Ensure that all course materials are currently in print, readily available from publishers, and provide information about where the Soldier may purchase the materials to the Soldier.
  - h. Complete institution training as part of the institution's on-boarding process.

2. Work with SOC and the Technical Integrator to offer Soldier access to class enrollment through the ACES portal AFTER initial on-boarding:
  - a. Continue to submit class term schedule data, tuition, and class fees using either the standardized web-based tool or the FTP class data upload. There will continue to be a minimum two-day lag time between when the class information is submitted and the date they appear in the integrated catalog, potentially longer for on-post classes. This is due to the requirement for Education Services Officer (ESO) approval of on-post classes. Class term schedule data and class-section attributes will include data as previously mentioned above in paragraph 1. e.
  - b. Certify the accuracy of all data submissions to the term schedule when submitted through the data-collection tool.
  - c. Ensure that all course materials are currently in print, readily available from publishers, and that information about where the Soldier may purchase the materials is provided to the Soldier.
  - d. Once initial on-boarding is complete, there will be designated change windows during the year for the institution to make changes to its degree maps. At these times, the institution will provide SOC with updates or changes to degree maps for approval prior to the submission of course data to the ACES portal, and work with SOC and the Technical Integrator to revalidate degree map setup after these changes are reported.

#### **D. Degree and Course Availability**

1. Institutions offering classroom-based classes on Army installations will upload term schedules in accordance with local installation needs and local ESO approval.
2. Institutions offering classes by distance learning, classroom-based classes off of an Army installation, or on another Service's installation will upload course/class information only for courses/classes that satisfy degree requirements in documented degree maps authorized by ACES.
3. Institutions offering classroom-based classes on Army installations will coordinate class cancellations with the local ESO in accordance with local installation agreements/contracts. All institutions will update the ACES portal to reflect ESO-approved class cancellations, splits and scheduling changes, as required with the local ESO and the Technical Integrator. The institution will be responsible for notifying Soldiers of class changes/cancellations.
4. Institutions offering classes by distance learning will coordinate class cancellations with the Technical Integrator. All institutions will update the ACES portal to reflect class cancellations, splits, and scheduling changes. The institution will be responsible for notifying Soldiers of class changes/cancellations.

#### **E. Documented Degree Plans**

The institution will:

1. Agree to accept the electronic Joint Services Transcript (JST) as the official source for military training and experience documentation with corresponding college credit

recommendations. This does not require any technical development on the part of the institutions. Institutions receive email notifications when a PDF version of a JST transcript is available to be downloaded by the institution for a Soldier.

2. Complete a formal evaluation of the student's prior learning when the student has been accepted for admission and arrange for the submission of all prior college transcripts, JST, or DD Form 295, if applicable.
3. Submit to GoArmyEd Soldier data on prior learning experiences and coursework that satisfy degree requirements. For Soldiers in Drop Down Degree Plans or programs not listed in GoArmyEd, the school will provide the Soldier a paper Student Agreement or Documented Degree plan, which will be placed in the Soldier's eFile. For Soldiers in a Fully Developed Degree Plan, the schools will submit the data in the electronic format provided by the Technical Integrator. GoArmyEd will generate a Student Agreement/Documented Degree Plan populated by the data provided by the institution. Additionally, the institution will ensure a quality review is used for submitting an accurate credit evaluation and populating the SA or documented degree plan. This transaction does not require technical development from the institution. Institutions will create a flat file data template based on template specifications provided by the Technical Integrator that will be sent to the Technical Integrator via FTP.
4. The SA or documented degree plan will be submitted to the Army/Soldier as soon as possible after the Soldier has completed six semester hours of credit with the school.
5. Sign a letter annually with SOC confirming that the institution will honor the SA or electronic documented degree plan posted to the Soldier's record on the ACES portal as a binding contract between the institution and the Soldier, in the absence of an electronic signature on each document. The documented degree plan or SA defines individual degree requirements, credit awards applied toward the requirements, and path to graduation.
6. For Soldiers in a Fully Developed Degree Plan, use the approved electronic process to submit additional transfer credits to the ACES portal Degree Progress Report as awarded to the Soldier by the institution after the initial SA or documented degree plan has been submitted. This transaction does not require technical development from the institution. Institutions will use the same data template referenced above in E. 3. to send data to the Technical Integrator via FTP.
7. Submit a new SA or documented degree plan when an ACES counselor approves a change in an education goal/degree plan for a Soldier. The new SA or documented degree plan will be a paper document if the Soldier changes to a Drop Down Degree Plan or an electronically submitted data file if the Soldier changes to a Fully Developed Degree Plan. This transaction does not require technical development from the institution. Institutions will use the same data template referenced above in section E3 to send data to the Technical Integrator via FTP.

Note: If a Soldier already has an existing SA or documented degree plan issued by the home institution prior to initial on-boarding, the institution is not required to recreate and submit an input file of Soldier data on prior learning experiences and coursework that satisfy degree requirements. The home institution or ACES will upload a scanned version of the Soldier's most recent SA or documented degree plan into the Soldier's student record in GoArmyEd.

## **F. Class Enrollments/Additions/Rejections/Drops/Withdrawals**

The institution will:

1. Receive and review class enrollment and drop/withdrawal requests sent by the Technical Integrator via nightly flat-file FTP exchanges. The file will include Soldier identification information, class identification information, the portion of tuition to be covered by TA, and the portion of tuition to be paid by the Soldier directly to the institution. The institution must establish a record of the Soldier in their student information system, if a record has not previously been established at the institution. Development of interfaces to automatically upload this data into the institution's student administration system is not required as schools may review the registration requests and key them into their system. Some high enrollment schools may elect to automate this upload process.
2. The institution must reject enrollment requests within three business days by submitting a standardized FTP file to the Technical Integrator that communicates class enrollment rejections.
  - a. Soldier will be considered "accepted" into the class if no rejection notification is received through the ACES portal within the specified time limit.
  - b. Class rejections will include one of several standard reason codes specifying why the Soldier was rejected from the class.
3. Only process add, drop, or withdrawal requests for a Soldier using Army TA funding when these actions are initiated through the ACES portal.
4. Expedite processing of class add/drops/withdrawals through the ACES portal.
  - a. Date any drops or withdrawals to match the transaction date included in the FTP file.
  - b. The institution may only enroll a Soldier in the same class/section specified in the FTP file. If that class is not available, or has been cancelled, the institution must reject the enrollment request. The institution may not alter the class request in the FTP file exchange. A new class enrollment request must be submitted by the Soldier.
  - c. For class enrollments initiated and processed through the ACES portal, the Soldier must likewise initiate all class drops/withdrawals through the ACES portal. The institution **MUST** process drop/withdrawal requests for said class through the ACES portal in the nightly flat-file FTP exchange. If a class drop/withdrawal is not initiated by the Soldiers through the ACES portal, the Soldier will be financially liable for the cost of the class.

## **G. Grade Submission**

The institution will:

1. Submit grades to the GoArmyEd portal using the web-grading tool or by sending a flat file via FTP, configured to the Technical Integrator's specifications. A final grade for a class must be submitted within 14 days of a class end date. If no grade is received, the Soldier will be put on hold and unable to register for additional classes until the missing grade is resolved or posted.

2. When a legitimate grade has been earned, the institution may NOT submit an Incomplete (“I”) as a placeholder in order to meet the 14 calendar day deadline.
3. For instances where the Soldier has been granted an “I” grade:
  - a. Institution must submit the “I” within 14 calendar days of the class end date.
  - b. Institution should resolve the “I” grade and submit a final grade for the class through the ACES portal within 120 calendar days after the class end date. A Soldier will be subject to the Army recoupment policy for tuition costs UNLESS the institution submits a grade before the 120-day deadline.
    - (1) Institution may retain an “I” grade on a Soldier’s official transcript longer than 120 days, if its policies permit it to do so.
    - (2) Institution may submit a final grade to the ACES portal after the 120-day deadline to convert the "I" grade to the grade recorded on the Soldier’s official transcript. However, Soldiers will be subject to recoupment according to Army policy if the “I” grade is not resolved within 120 days after the class end date.

## **H. Graduation Reporting**

The institution will:

1. Notify the Technical Integrator via an FTP file using an electronic data submission template when a Soldier has completed all requirements for his or her degree plan.
2. Notify the Technical Integrator via an FTP file using an electronic data submission template when a Soldier is within six SH of graduation coinciding with the institution’s degree audit/graduation check of the Soldier’s file.

## **I. Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and Advising**

The institution will:

Use the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) tool to seek assistance with the ACES portal and to resolve cases escalated by the helpdesk on behalf of Soldiers or ACES staff when they require institution intervention.

## **J. Invoicing**

The institution will:

1. Register with the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) and update/renew registration annually in order to receive payment for valid TA claims. CCR is the primary vendor database for the U.S. Federal Government. Since October 1, 2003, it is federally mandated that any organization wishing to do business with the federal government under a Federal Acquisition Regulation-based contract must be registered in CCR before being awarded a contract (in this case, Tuition Assistance request). You can register online at <https://www.bpn.gov/ccr/> . While CCR is not a payment system and does not directly facilitate payments, federal government agencies are required to make payments only to vendors' bank account information

as it appears in CCR. Vendors are required to update their entry at least once every 365 days.

2. Accept the Government Purchase Card (GPC) as the method of payment for valid TA claims. Department of Defense has moved in the direction of mandating all payments to be via the Government Purchase Card (GPC). Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) will only be used in extenuating circumstances on an exception basis.
3. Generate an invoice report within the ACES portal during a designated window each month for all class registrations that are 19 percent or more past the class start date (Tri-Services contracts will continue to bill in accordance with the contract). Generation of the invoice is completed by the ACES portal and requires no technical development by the institution.
  - a. Only class registrations that were initiated by the Soldier through the ACES portal will be included in the invoice. Payments for course registrations made by the Soldier directly through the institution cannot be invoiced to the Army.
  - b. If the Soldier withdraws from the course, the course enrollment will be included on the invoice with a prorated price based on a standardized refund schedule or depending on the institution's refund schedule, a set of standardized refund schedules applicable to all schools.
  - c. Once the institution submits an invoice, it will be reviewed by the Army for approval.
  - d. Once approved by the Army, the institution will be authorized to receive invoice payment for the approved amount. Paper invoices or TA forms no longer need to be maintained and processed by the institution.
  - e. The ACES portal will enable the institution to track the status of their invoices from creation to payment.
3. Be able to dispute individual items on the invoice. These will be flagged, removed from the invoice, and placed into a dispute process. Once the disputed item is resolved, it will be included on the next invoice for payment.
4. Only submit invoices that include the TA amount authorized by the Army. The remaining balance for the cost of the class shall be collected by the institution from the Soldier directly. At no time should the institution directly bill for or collect from the Soldier any portion of a class covered by TA.
5. Distribute refunds proportionately to the Soldier and the Army when the Soldier pays for a portion of a course with TA and then subsequently withdraws from a course and is entitled a partial refund.

## **K. Publicity**

1. The processing of TA through the ACES portal by institutions does not imply any particular endorsement of an institution's program for any individual or any group of Soldiers. Institution may promote the fact that TA is available "up-front" through the ACES portal, but institutions are prohibited from communicating in any form that they are "approved or endorsed" by Army.

2. Institutions may utilize the GoArmyEd logo for publicity purposes in accordance with GoArmyEd logo usage guidelines.

#### **L. Administration of Tuition and Fees**

1. Army TA policy will fund only courses that qualify for pre-approved, reimbursable TA in accordance with AR 621-5, DoD Directive 1322.8, and DoD Directive 1322.25.
2. The Army will pay TA in accordance with appropriate regulations. The remainder shall be paid by the Soldier to the institution at the time of registration in accordance with institution policy.
3. TA will be limited to tuition costs and fees specifically required as a condition of enrollment in a particular class.
4. Tuition charged to Soldiers will, in no case, exceed the rate charged to nonmilitary students, unless agreed upon by both the institution and the Army.
5. The institution will ensure their electronic fund information with Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) is current for timely TA invoice payment processing.
6. Notices of changes in fees will be provided to the ACES portal, as soon as possible, but not less than 90 days prior to implementation.
7. Refunds will be paid in accordance with the standardized refund policy agreed upon with the institution.
8. The institution will refund to the Army 100 percent of the tuition and fees paid for a course that is cancelled by the institution through no fault of the Army.
9. Provide the tuition fee structure for the degree programs your institution proposes to offer in GoArmyEd to ACES on a yearly basis. The current established DOD standardized TA payment rate is capped at \$250 per semester hour or equivalent quarter hour, clock hour not-to-exceed a fiscal year ceiling limit of \$4,500.
10. Provide a statement on your institution's ability to provide one military friendly tuition rate for all Soldiers including establishment of an in-state tuition rate.

#### **M. Terminology**

1. Degree: The academic discipline and level of postsecondary study selected by the Soldier upon selecting a home college within the ACES portal.
2. Degree Map: A degree plan or map which lists all requirements and all courses from the home college that can be used to fulfill each requirement. The degree plan is set up in GoArmyEd and is created into a PDF which is provided as a link from GoArmyEd.
3. Drop-down Degree Plan: A program that is listed in GoArmyEd by program title only. Program requirements are provided to Soldiers by the school.
4. Documented Degree Plan: PDF created when institutions electronically send a Soldier "input file" to the Technical Integrator, containing Soldier-specific data on prior learning (coursework, evaluated credit and testing assessments). This document shows the degree-plan requirements, successfully completed prior coursework, and evaluated credit for military experience and other credit sources as applied to institutional degree requirements in a standardized format. The input file

is required from the home college upon a Soldier's completion of second course with the institution.

5. Student Agreement: A documented degree plan from a member institution identifying guaranteed course transferability among other SOC degree network institutions as well as Soldier-specific data on where prior learning credits (coursework, evaluated credit and testing assessments) are applied to institutional degree requirements in a standardized format. The input file is required from the home college upon a Soldier's completion of second course with the institution.
6. Course: A program of instruction. Course data are common across all classes. (See "Class" definition below). Courses have attributes such as title, description, credits, and prerequisites. An example of a course is BIO 101.
7. Class: A section of a course. Classes have attributes such as instruction mode, enrollment capacity, meeting time, and location. Soldiers will enroll in classes, not courses. An example of a class is BIO 101 starting 4/7/06, ending 6/30/06, in Miller Building on MWF at 0900.

### Points of Contact

Name	Phone
<b>Army Continuing Education System (ACES)</b>	
ACES Director	502-613-8630
GoArmyEd Branch Manager	502-613-8591
<b>Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges</b>	
Program Coordinator	800-368-5622 202-667-0079