

Army Acquisition Non-Commissioned Officer Advanced Civil Schooling Policy

Summary of Changes

PARA	SIGNIFICANT CHANGES FROM THE PREVIOUS POLICY
7.a	Funding: Changed to reflect requirement for acceptance to NPS and optional school of choice.
9.c	Requirements for Participants: Changed to reflect requirement for acceptance to NPS and as an option, School of Choice.
Encl 2 Para 1.i	Application Packet Standards: Reworded this section to read “Letter of Acceptance from NPS. Letter of Acceptance from School of Choice if necessary.”



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OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY
ACQUISITION LOGISTICS AND TECHNOLOGY
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WASHINGTON DC 20310-0103

SFAE

24 April 2025

**MEMORANDUM FOR MILITARY OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALITY 51C CONTRACTING
NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS**

**SUBJECT: Army Acquisition Non-Commissioned Officer Advanced Civil Schooling
Policy and Procedures**

1. References:

a. Assistant Secretary of the Army (Acquisition, Logistics, and Technology), SFAE memorandum (Army Acquisition Noncommissioned Officer Advanced Civil Schooling Selection and Attendance Policy and Procedures), 31 January 2022 – hereby superseded.

b. U.S. Army Human Resources Command (HRC), Fully Funded Graduate Programs Policy and Procedures, Appendix A - ACS Student Handbook. This document can be accessed through the HRC website (<https://www.hrc.army.mil>) for users with a valid Common Access Card (CAC).

2. Purpose. This memorandum establishes policy and procedures for application to the Advanced Civil Schooling (ACS) Program and the selection of applicants for this program. It supersedes reference 1.a.

3. Applicability. This memorandum applies to all Active Component Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) 51C Contracting Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs).

4. General. The ACS Program provides an opportunity for MOS 51C Contracting NCOs to pursue fully funded advanced degree programs at civilian universities on a full-time basis. The program's goal is to ensure MOS 51C NCOs receive a quality education in an acquisition relevant graduate degree in a timely and cost-effective manner, and to significantly improve the NCO's competency as a business advisor. Failure to comply with the policy or procedures outlined in this document will result in non-selection or removal from the program.

5. Responsibilities:

a. Army Director, Acquisition Career Management (DACM).

1) Has oversight of the ACS Program.

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2) Serves as the final approval authority for MOS 51 Contracting NCOs selected to participate in the ACS Program and is the final approval authority for the ACS Program Order of Merit List (OML).

b. Army DACM Office.

1) Manages execution of ACS funds including tracking and yearly projections in coordination with the HRC.

2) As the proponent, establishes ACS Program personnel policies and procedures and serves as the training coordinator for the Army Acquisition Workforce (AAW).

3) Initiates the establishment, control, and execution of students' training program through a review of the proposed program and validation of students' academic progress through the Department of the Army (DA) Form 2125 (Report to Training Agency).

4) Ensures NPS funding is coordinated and paid through USAASC G8, and if school of choice, ACS funding is forwarded using Department of Defense Form 448 (Military Interdepartmental Purchase Request) to HRC.

5) Has responsibility for the ACS Program announcement and promotion to the AAW.

6) Coordinates quota allotments and host requirements with HRC and conducts the annual ACS competitive board process.

7) Staffs the program announcement and order of merit list to the DACM for final approval.

c. HRC.

1) Performs overall administrative coordination for the Army and maintains the Army Education Requirements System (AERS).

2) The MOS 51C NCO HRC Assignments Manager maintains the ACS students' program data in AERS, and coordinates personnel issues with the U.S. Army Student Detachment in Fort Jackson, South Carolina.

6. Application Eligibility. To be considered for the program, candidates must meet all the following eligibility requirements at the time of application submission:

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a. Obtain Colonel/O-6 command endorsement for approval of early departure (if required) and acknowledgement that backfill may not be immediately available.

b. Be in the rank of Staff Sergeant (SSG) through Master Sergeant (MSG). MSGs selected for the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy are ineligible to apply to the ACS Program.

c. Be Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA) certified Professional in Contracting.

d. Have a strong military file and possess potential for promotion.

e. Be able to complete the required Active-Duty Service Obligation (ADSO). This eligibility criteria means NCOs must not be close enough to their Retention Control Points (RCPs) that they cannot complete their ADSO. Promotion to the next rank to avoid the RCP cannot be assumed. The maximum time in service (TIS) allowed for 51C NCOs at the start of the program is as follows:

1) Applicants in the rank of SSG, with or without an OML number may not have more than 14 years TIS.

2) Applicants in the rank of SFC, with or without an OML number may not have more than 18 years TIS.

3) MSG applicants may not have more than 20 years TIS.

f. Have an undergraduate grade point average of 2.5 or higher.

g. Not already possess a graduate degree in an acquisition-related discipline. NCOs with graduate degrees in non-business-related disciplines may be considered.

h. Served at least 24 months as a 51C NCO in a valid acquisition workforce position, immaterial of time in grade. This requirement will be validated using NCO Evaluation Reports (NCOERs). If applicable, the NCO may submit a supplemental memorandum, signed by the first Colonel/O-6 in his/her chain of command, when he/she is awaiting a qualifying NCOER (i.e., NCOER is not finished yet). The NCO's Soldier Record Brief will not be the primary source of determining eligibility regarding this requirement.

7. Funding. Cost categories are defined as the actual tuition and fees for the approved program of study calculated for one complete calendar year and must be reflected on the acceptance and tuition letter.

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a. NCOs are authorized to apply to programs of study which fall under two funding categories for tuition and fees per year: (1) medium cost (\$48,000 - \$28,001) or (2) low cost (\$28,000 or less). NCOs must apply to the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) 815 Program. They may elect to apply for a low or medium-cost alternative if it is a top ranked business school that has been approved by the DACM Office. It is the DACM Office's discretion to select a NPS school or the NCO's school of choice. NCOs may not apply for high-cost programs at this time.

1) Medium-cost: The first 12 months shall not cost more than \$48,000 and the last six months shall not cost more than \$24,000. The total time is 18 months and total program cost is \$72,000 or less.

2) Low-cost: The first 12 months of the program shall not cost more the \$28,000 and the last six months shall not cost more than \$14,000. The total time is 18 months, and the total program cost is \$42,000 or less.

b. The Army will not pay or reimburse other costs, such as parking passes, student identification cards, registration, transcripts, graduation, application, deposit, enrollment, cap and gown, recreation, technology, orientation, reservation, prerequisite work (for example: entrance exams), books, thesis, and dissertation. These costs are the sole responsibility of the NCO.

c. In all cases, if approved for school of choice, NCOs must request in-state tuition rates and attempt to negotiate a reduced tuition agreement with the university that will place the institution in the authorized cost category. Please see Reference 1.b for tuition negotiation guidance. This document can be accessed through the HRC website (<https://www.hrc.army.mil>) for users with a valid CAC.

d. Students are not authorized to pay any tuition out-of-pocket or make up the difference in tuition to attend a higher cost category university.

e. ACS program funds will not be provided as reimbursement for funds expended by the student or another organization.

8. Scholastic Institutions and Programs of Study:

a. This ACS Program will fund resident-only institutions with business programs accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB). The AACSB extends beyond regional accreditation.

b. Distance learning, satellite, and non-traditional schedules (off-duty hours, night and weekend classes) are prohibited.

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c. Programs of study must be graduate-level, degree-granting programs in a business-related discipline (for example, accounting, law, business, finance, contracts, purchasing, economics, quantitative management), and must be accredited by the AACSB.

d. Degrees must be completed within a maximum of 18 months after the start of the master's degree program. Waivers will not be approved to attend programs longer than 18 months in duration.

e. Once approved, changes to the school and/or course of study are not permissible except under extreme circumstances, such as new course requirements for degree completion (must be documented), family emergency, or deployment. Exceptions must be justified in writing by the student and sent via email through the Army DACM Office to HRC for approval or disapproval. The resulting program must be completed within the same original timeframe of the original degree that was being pursued or not to exceed 18 months from the start of the original degree program. NCOs removed will still incur a three-to-one ADSO for the actual time spent in the ACS Program.

f. Changes not approved in advance may require removal of the student from the ACS Program and require the student to reimburse some or all tuition and fees. NCOs removed will still incur a three-to-one ADSO for the actual time spent in the ACS Program.

g. Absence from scheduled courses for a period of 30 calendar days may result in removal from the ACS Program and require the student to reimburse some or all tuition and fees. NCOs who fail to complete their enrolled program will be responsible to reimburse all costs and may receive an adverse DA Form 1059 (Service School Academic Evaluation Report). NCOs removed will still incur a three-to-one ADSO for the actual time spent in the ACS Program.

9. Requirements for the ACS Program Participants:

a. Meet all eligibility requirements as outlined in the DACM program announcement, reference 1.b, and this memorandum prior to the closing date of the announcement.

b. Complete and submit the ACS packet in accordance with requirements in the DACM program announcement, enclosure to this memorandum, and reference 1.b, including a signed command endorsement outlining how the completion of the ACS Program will benefit the NCO and the U.S. Army.

c. Apply and receive acceptance from NPS and optionally, a school of choice. Funding level for any school of choice must be within the low or medium cost level as defined in paragraph 7.a above. High-cost institutions will not be considered.

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d. Receive a minimum grade of B in each course. Two withdrawals, failures, course grades below a B, or incompletes from ACS Program funded course(s) may result in removal from the ACS Program. The ACS Program will not fund repeated classes due to grades lower than a B.

e. Attend school full-time (to include summer/winter sessions when available) and complete the degree in the shortest and most cost-effective way possible. Because the required number of credit hours varies from program to program and some individuals may need prerequisite courses, all prerequisite courses must be completed before final submission of the ACS application. ACS will not fund prerequisite courses.

f. Select courses, to include electives when applicable, from the approved program of study, which underpins an acquisition and/or business function.

g. When planned courses are cancelled and/or unavailable, provide appropriate substitute classes to HRC no later than 60 calendar days prior to expected course start. Failure to provide substitute classes prior to course start is grounds for removal from the program. NCOs removed will still incur a three-to-one ADSO for the actual time spent in the ACS Program.

h. Request educational programs that are 18 months or less in duration. There will be no exceptions to policy for this requirement.

i. Enroll and complete the credit hours as set forth by the institution for full-time attendance.

j. Provide all required documentation in accordance with reference 1.b during and after completion of the ACS Program.

k. Incur a three-to-one ADSO for each day of schooling funded by the ACS Program.

10. Effective Date and Implementation. This policy is effective immediately, supersedes all previous Army DACM NCO ACS policies and will remain in effect until superseded.

11. For questions about individual applications, eligibility, or other requirements outlined within this policy, please contact the Army DACM Office's Acquisition Proponent NCO at usarmy.belvoir.usaasc.mbx.nco@army.mil.

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12. The point of contact for this policy is the Army DACM Office's Acquisition Workforce
Proponent Branch Chief at email: usarmy.belvoir.usaasc.mbx.nco@army.mil.

Encl



Digitally signed by
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RONALD R. RICHARDSON, JR.
Director
Acquisition Career Management

Army Acquisition Non-Commissioned Officer Advanced Civil Schooling Policy

Enclosure – Application Packet Standards

1. Military Occupational Specialty 51C Contracting Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs) interested in applying for the Advanced Civil Schooling (ACS) Program must submit the following documents to the Army Director, Acquisition Career Management (DACM) Office's 51C Proponent, using the Army Acquisition Professional Development System (AAPDS) tab in the Career Acquisition Management Personnel and Position Management Information System (CAPPMIS):

a. Department of the Army (DA) Form 4187 (Personnel Action), signed by the NCO's Battalion Commander in Block 13.

(1) A blank DA Form 4187 can be found on the Army Publishing Directorate website at https://armypubs.army.mil/pub/eforms/DR_a/pdf/A4187.pdf.

(2) The "TO" address in Block 2 of the DA Form 4187 is:

USAASC
SFAE-WPA (ATTN: NCO Proponent)
9900 Belvoir Rd, BLDG 201
Fort Belvoir, VA 22060

b. DA Form 2166-9 Non-Commissioned Officer Evaluation Reports that show 48 months of Contracting experience or more.

c. Service Record Brief (SRB), dated within two months of packet submission.
Note: The Army DACM Office may ask the NCO to provide a more recent SRB at any time.

d. Last two DA Forms 705 (Army Physical Fitness Test Score Card).
Note: The Army DACM Office may ask the NCO to provide a more recent DA Form 705 at any time.

e. Last two DA Form 5500/5501 (Body Fat Worksheet), if applicable.
Note: The Army DACM Office may ask the NCO to provide a more recent DA Form 5500/5501 at any time, in conjunction with the most recent DA Form 705.

f. Letters of Recommendation (LORs), one of which must be from the NCO's first-line supervisor. The NCO should not have more than three LORs in an application packet.

g. A Letter to the Board, addressed to the panel, explaining why the NCO should be considered for the ACS Program.

h. Unofficial college transcript(s) from all universities attended.

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i. Letter of Acceptance from NPS. Letter of Acceptance from School of Choice if necessary.

j. DA Form 1618 (Application for Detail as Student Officer at a Civilian Educational Institution or at Training with Industry), signed by the NCO's Battalion Commander.

(1) A blank DA Form 1618 can be found on the Army Publishing Directorate website at https://armypubs.army.mil/pub/eforms/DR_a/pdf/A1618.pdf.

(2) The TO address on the front of the DA Form 1618 is:

USAASC
SFAE-WPA (ATTN: NCO Proponent)
9900 Belvoir Rd, BLDG 201
Fort Belvoir, VA 22060

k. Active Duty Service Obligation memorandum.

l. Branch Manager Memorandum. (Note: The NCO's Branch Manager provides this memorandum to the Soldier. It certifies that the NCO is not scheduled for deployment or reassignment).

m. ACS Nomination Form (for a copy of this form, go to the HRC website or contact 51C NCO ACS Proponency Officer)

2. Incomplete packets will not be considered.

3. For issues with CAPPMS, please submit a CAMP Help Desk ticket at <https://apps.asc.army.mil/camp/index.cfm?fuseaction=support.helpRequest>.

4. Point of contact for the 51C NCO ACS Program is the Army DACM Office's 51C Career Management NCO at usarmy.belvoir.usaasc.mbx.nco@army.mil.