

ArmyTimes

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2-YEAR DEGREES FOR EVERY SOLDIER



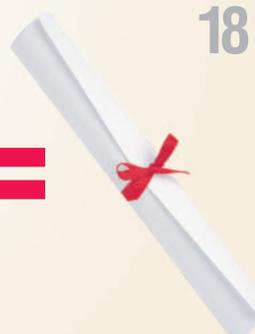
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[SOLDIERATHLETES]

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militarytimes.com/multimedia
 Video keyword search: **Hertling, initial**



Enlisted, earn a degree faster

Program starting in January grants credits, leads to promotion points

By Jim Tice
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FORT MONROE, Va. — All soldiers soon will easily receive college credits for Army training and education in a new program that will enable them to earn an associate degree within their first enlistment.

Even completing basic training is worth college credits in The Enlisted Degree Program that begins Jan. 1.

Army training and education will be worth up to 45 of the 60 college credits needed for an AA degree, said Jeffery Colimon, Institute NCO Professional Development, HQs, Army Training and Doctrine Command.

And those credits will produce promotion points — and faster promotions.

Ten promotion points will be granted to any soldier who completes a degree while on active duty.

When the new promotion point system goes into effect June 1, civilian education can bring 75 points toward promotion to

GOT CLASS

The number of non-prior-service recruits entering the active Army and Army Reserve with some college in fiscal 2010 more than doubled the number nine years before. Levels of college education among new soldiers in fiscal 2010, compared with fiscal 2001:

Completed	Fiscal 2001	Fiscal 2010
One semester	2,229	3,631
60 semester hours	860	2,801
Associate degree	796	1,943
Bachelor's degree	2,064	5,725
Master's degree	117	601
Post-master's degree	4	10
Doctorate	8	6
Post-doctorate	0	12
First professional degree	4	6
Total	6,082	14,745

sergeant and 100 points toward promotion to staff sergeant.

Excelsior College, a state college based in Albany, N.Y., will be the first school offering the program. The Army is in the process of adding schools.

"Soldiers can potentially receive college credits for functional training," Colimon said. For example he said, Excelsior College will use the Army writing course soldiers take and apply that to the college's professional writing course to get soldiers the full three credits for the course.

Examples of Army training that

will be worth college credits include:

- Network Coordinator Course for CMF 25.
- Combat Life Saver.
- Cultural awareness training.
- Language training.
- SMARTFORCE Course/eLearning.
- Other ACE recommended credits.

The program allows soldiers to complete degree requirements at their own pace and eases credit transfers between colleges.

How many credits soldiers will be awarded for Army training depends on military occupational specialty and requirements for specific degrees. Soldiers in MOSs that include lengthy schooling — such as Special Forces, language and military intelligence — will easily stack up to the 45 credits.

Colimon said the Army was confident that all soldiers would pick up 50 percent to 75 percent of AA credit requirements just through their required training. Many soldiers will be able to pick up the remaining credits needed for their AA degrees within their first tours by taking just one class a semester.

Soldiers can cover the costs of

classes through the Army's tuition assistance program, which pays up to \$4,500 annually for tuition and authorized fees. The Army has designed the program so that the annual tuition is not likely to exceed what is allowed under the tuition assistance program.

"Given the level of intensity of military service today, and the importance most soldiers give to civilian education, we consid-

er this an important initiative," said John Sparks, director of the Institute of Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development.

Sparks said the Army's high operating tempo, and the requirement for soldiers to train when not deployed, "makes it challenging to provide a process for junior enlisted soldiers who want to pursue civilian education."

One key tool that junior enlisted soldiers will have to use in participating in the Enlisted Degree Program is the new Web-based Structured Self Development program that began Oct. 1.

While the Structured Self Development courses are mandatory, participation in the evolving degree program will not be required. But Sparks said soldiers would be wise to link basic training, Warrior Leader Course and other Army requirements to civilian education and the possibility of earning a college degree.

How it works

The Army long has worked with educational associations to assess military training and experiences for college credits.

Under a notional example provided by officials here, this is how soldiers would earn college cred-

its as part of the Enlisted Degree Program:

All soldiers will receive a total of 18 credit hours for Basic Combat Training, SSD1 and WLC. Additional credit may be awarded for training in an MOS and other Army training. Exactly how much credit will be determined by the university and will depend on factors such as the soldier's MOS or his score on tests.

"A soldier will have to complete additional courses such as English, math, science, info literacy and electives of some type," Colimon said. Soldiers can also receive credits by taking exams such as DANTES and can transfer credits from previous colleges.

Which college courses a soldier will need to take will depend on the degree sought.

Army officials envision that four types of degrees would be awarded under the program:

- Associate of Science in Liberal Arts.
- Associate of Arts in Liberal Arts.
- Associate of Science in Business.
- Associate of Arts and Science in Administrative and Management Studies.

While the specifics have not been finalized, officials here anticipate that prospective soldiers will be introduced to the basics of the Enlisted Degree Program by their recruiters, with more detailed information being provided as they enter the training base and move to their first unit of assignment.

"In the next few months, we'll be making decisions on how we want this information to flow," Sparks said.

Military officials also are working with the civilian education community to identify schools that want to partner with the Army. □

Education requirements toughen with intro of Structured Self Development

By Jim Tice
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FORT MONROE, Va. — Massive changes to the Army's enlisted education system have imposed mandatory requirements for soldiers to go to school.

Structured Self Development is mandatory for all enlisted sol-

diers — private through sergeant major. The Enlisted Degree Program is voluntary — but it contains a mechanism for you to apply SSD course credits toward a degree.

In effect, when you do your SSD schooling, you're going to college at the same time.

The SSD now includes a series of online self-development courses that are mandatory for active and Reserve soldiers. The SSD launched Oct. 1.

Courses are not specific for the different specialties and career fields of the Enlisted Personnel Management System, but address

issues that are common across the service, such as soldier health and fitness, Army history, ethics, military writing, leadership and effective management.

The multitiered system of Web-based Structured Self Development instruction is designed to bridge the learning gap that

occurs between operational assignments and formal military schooling, particularly the newly retooled courses of the NCO Education System.

Soldiers are required to complete each level of SSD within

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three years, although officials are confident most soldiers will not require that much time.

Each level consists of 80 hours of instruction, with all courses divided into different modules and lessons.

"The different levels of Structured Self Development not only are designed to provide soldiers with knowledge and skills of immediate use operationally, but that will build on previous experience and learning and prepare them for the next level of NCOES," according to Command Sgt. Maj. Raymond Chandler, commandant of the Sergeants Major Academy.

All instruction will be delivered via the Web and will not require soldiers to use special items of equipment.

Courseware will be accessed via the Army Training Management System using Army Knowledge Online credentials.

Army policy will require students to submit answers to SSD tests with a digital signature using a Common Access Card.

While SSD currently is designed to be delivered by personal computer, near-term enhancements could expand that capability to mobile devices.

The program will be implemented Jan. 1 for soldiers who complete the Advanced Leader Course and Senior Leader Course, and May 1 for senior NCOs who graduate from the Sergeant Major Course.

ALC common core phase

Under a process that began Oct. 1, 2009, the Army also has fielded a new common core phase of the Advanced Leader Course, previously called the Basic NCO Course.

This training is delivered online to soldiers when they complete the Warrior Leader Course and, at least for the near-term, will serve as the second tier of Structured Self Development.

Soldiers will be scheduled for enrollment in the ALC common core separately from the Structured Self Development program.

Structured Self Development also is designed to complement two other learning initiatives, both of them optional.

The first, called Guided Self Development, is a defined set of recommended learning progressively sequenced across a career and are tailored to the specific professional development needs of a soldier.

"This essentially involves nothing more than telling soldiers what is important in their professional career," said John Sparks, a retired command sergeant major who heads the Army's Institute for Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development.

The second initiative, called Personal Self Development, is designed to assist soldiers in achieving individual goals, such as civilian education for a post-military career, or advanced technical training that may help soldiers later in their military careers.

Officials here at Training and Doctrine Command headquarters said first-line leaders not only have a responsibility to mentor their subordinates on self-development issues, but ensure that they have the time to conduct those studies.

Soldiers will be enrolled in SSD

courses by Human Resources Command, and they will be notified of that enrollment by an AKO e-mail from the Army Training Requirements and Resources System.

The e-mail will contain the Web address for accessing the SSD courseware. □

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