

# **Initial Education Counseling for USAF Students**

**AFVEC and its uses:** The AF Virtual Education Center (AFVEC) can be accessed from the AF Portal under the **Education & Training** category. On AFVEC you can: **apply for TA**, request CCAF transcripts, review your past enrollments, review your CCAF Web Progress Report, check your CLEP/DANTES test scores, look up schools and their education programs, locate information about the AU-ABC and GEM programs, learn more about AF COOL, submit an application for the SkillBridge program and much more.

**Community College of the Air Force (CCAF) Web Progress Report:** This report shows which AFSC degree program you are enrolled in, how many credit hours have been awarded, as well as what is left in order to complete a **CCAF Associate in Applied Science (AAS) degree**. There are five areas, which are broken down as follows: Technical Education, Leadership, Management and Military Studies (LMMS), Program Electives, General Education (Oral Communication, Written Communication, Math, Social Science, and Humanities) and Physical Education. There are links with explanations for each requirement. CCAF degree requirements must be completed prior to separation/retirement in order to be awarded the CCAF AAS degree.

**Transfer of Credits:** Credits can be transferred **IF** they meet the degree requirements of the school in question, and are from a school with equal or higher accreditation. Not all credits are transferrable. In order for CCAF to accept your transfer credit toward your CCAF degree, you must send CCAF an official transcript - - directly from your school to CCAF - - at the following address: **CCAF/DESS, 100 S. Turner Blvd, Maxwell AFB – Gunter Annex, AL 36114-3011 )**

**General Education Mobile (GEM):** The GEM program is an initiative that allows Airmen to complete CCAF approved courses in each of the five General Education areas: Oral communication, Written Communication, Mathematics, Social Science and Humanities. It is designed to help Airmen obtain their CCAF degree in a faster and more efficient manner by leveraging the offerings of 2-year colleges .

**Goal and Degree Plan Required:** You will need to **create an education goal and upload a degree** plan via AFVEC. AF policy requires an approved education goal prior to requesting TA (use Tutorials on AFVEC site). A generic degree/academic plan can be used for up to 6 SHs. Your school will ask you to provide official transcripts from previously attended schools for credit evaluation. An **evaluated degree plan** must be provided to the Education Center prior to utilizing TA beyond 6 SHs. The education center must update your education goal with your evaluated degree plan. Please note: A degree plan will not be required for your CCAF degree education goal.

**Testing Availability:** The Education Center has a National Testing Center (NTC) sponsored by Park University which provides CLEP and DANTES testing free of charge to active duty students. Upon successful completion of a CLEP/DANTES exam, you earn college credit. Study guides are available at the Education Center, online on AFVEC, and at [www .petersons.com/airforce](http://www.petersons.com/airforce).

**Military TA:** Every Airmen is authorized **\$4,500** in tuition assistance per Fiscal Year (1 Oct thru 30Sep), which provides up to a maximum of **\$250 per semester hour**, and a maximum of \$166 per quarter hour. **Officers incur a 2-year ADSC** each time TA is used. Military TA can be used to complete one Associates Degree, one Bachelor Degree and one Master's Degree.

**College Fees are not covered by USAF Tuition Assistance (TA):** USAF Tuition Assistance can be used for tuition only.

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**Military TA rules:** \*NOTE: ANYONE WITH A CURRENT UIF, REFERRAL E/OPR, ARTICLE 15, OR FAILED PT TEST IS NOT ELIGIBLE FOR TA\* 1) You must request TA before the class starts. Retroactive TA is not allowed. 2) Your supervisor must electronically approve all TA requests (allow time for this). 3) If you withdraw from a course you must notify the school AND the Education Center immediately. You are responsible for reimbursing the government for all TA not reimbursed to the USAF. 4) If you fail a course, you must reimburse the USAF for the full amount of tuition paid. 5) If military duties prevent you from attending class you can apply for a waiver of reimbursement. AFVEC provides guidance on this process. You must submit a letter explaining the reasons for withdrawing from the course(s) signed by your Squadron Commander. 6) You are responsible for ensuring that your education record reflects your official grade within 60 days after the class ends. 7) All officers incur a 2-year ADSC each time TA is used (runs concurrently with any other ADSC). 8) You are allowed 15 Semester Hours (5 classes) to establish a **GPA** for undergraduate degrees and you must maintain **2.0 GPA** to continue using TA. For graduate degrees, you will have 6 SHs (2 courses) to establish your GPA and you must maintain a 3.0 GPA, to continue using TA.

**Airman's Expenses:** You must pay for books & fees. Books rentals are available at: [www.campusbookrentals.com](http://www.campusbookrentals.com)

**Accreditation:** USAF tuition assistance funds may only be used at an accredited college or university that is recognized by the US Dept of Education. Accreditation can be Regional (highest level) or National.

**Methods of Course delivery:** You can take college courses on base, off-base, or online - TA covers all delivery methods. Please contact your school of choice to determine their methods of course delivery.

**GI Bill Use:** Use of the GI Bill while on active duty is usually discouraged. If you have either the Montgomery or Post 9/11 GI Bill you may use it in conjunction with TA to pay a tuition balance, if needed (this is called Top-Up). Go to [www.gibill.va.gov](http://www.gibill.va.gov) for more info, or call 1-888-442-4551.

**Financial Aid:** Go to [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) and follow steps 1, 2, and 3 for Pell Grants and other sources of financial aid to help pay for books. Note: Do not attempt to use two resources of funding for the same thing. Use the second source to pay the balance.

**Change of Enrollment:** AF policy requires you to work on one degree at a time, except for your CCAF and a Bachelor's degree. You are allowed to switch your degree program one time after your education goal has been approved, but only if you have completed less than 50% of the coursework for your original degree program. You will not be able to exceed 124 SH of tuition assistance. If you are considering changing your education goal, please discuss it with an education counselor first.

**Foreign Transcript Evaluation:** If you need to send CCAF a foreign transcript, it must be translated into English before CCAF will accept it. Please contact a counselor for information on companies that will translate transcripts and the costs involved.

**AF COOL:** With AF COOL, you have a maximum of \$4,500 available to complete as many certifications as you wish, while you are enlisted in the military. The certification must be related to your AFSC. To see a list of the certifications related to your AFSC, as well as, the rules and requirements for utilizing AF COOL funds, log into AFVEC and click on the AF COOL link.

**Commissioning:** Information is available at the myPers and with the AF Portal. The application process is online and step-by-step guidance is provided.

## **ACTIVE DUTY TA BRIEF, FY16**

### **Per AFI 36-2649, Chapter 6**

Annual Cap (per Fiscal Year): \$4,500.00

Cap per Semester Hour: \$250.00 (\$166.66 per Quarter Hour)

Credit Cap: 124 (Undergrad); 42 (Grad)

TA must be applied for online at the Air Force Virtual Education Center (AFVEC), via the AF Portal. If there are no flags to be addressed in your education record, click on **“Start a Funding Request”** on the right; and follow the prompts.

If there are flags in your record, these must be addressed prior to applying for tuition assistance. In some instances, a flag will not appear until you have tried to apply for TA.

While you can always refer to the AFI, here are the more pertinent items to keep in mind:

- It is your responsibility to apply for TA for **each and every term**.
- Air Force Tuition Assistance (TA) **will cover tuition only**; no fees or books.
- TA for college courses utilizing Military TA **MUST BE applicable to a degree**. If it is not for CCAF, then we need an **official, evaluated degree plan** from the school scanned into your record. The degree plan must come from the school. If you are new to the school, you can take **up to 2 classes** (6 SHs) **with an unofficial (generic) plan**.
- The school **MUST HAVE a signed MOU** (Memorandum of Understanding) with the DoD.
- **YOUR SUPERVISOR is your first line of approval**. They take responsibility for ensuring that you have no personal, financial or professional hindrances to completing your course(s).
- **YOU** (the student) are responsible for making sure the **TA form is correct** and **YOU** are responsible for making sure **a copy of the TA form gets to the school**. The school uses the TA form to invoice the Air Force. If they do not get the TA form, the school will come after you for tuition payment.
- Please make sure the following items are complete/correct on the TA form before you submit:
  - o Has your supervisor signed? If they do not sign by the course start date, the TA form will be deleted from the system
  - o Are the term dates correct?
  - o Is the cost per credit hour correct?
  - o Is it accurately listed as a graduate/undergraduate or online or on/off base?
  - o Is the header and title of the course correct, ex MAT101 College Algebra
  - o **IS THE COURSE LISTED ON YOUR DEGREE PLAN?? (Most important!)**

- TA will automatically be **denied** to Airman with UIFs, failed PT tests, referral EPR/OPRs and those on a control roster.
- TA allows only one **degree program switch**, and only if you are less than 50% done with the original degree, so choose wisely
- Once the class starts and you **withdraw**, you will be **expected to reimburse the AF** the tuition unless it is determined that your reason for withdrawing was beyond your control. Also, a withdrawal entails notifying the Education Office as well as the school.
- Grades of "F" or "D" at the undergraduate level; or a grade of "C" or below at the graduate level will **require you to reimburse the AF the tuition**.
- It is your responsibility to make sure your course **grade(s) are reported** to us within 60 days out from the end of the class.
- A **GPA** of 2.0 is required for undergraduate classes utilizing TA and a GPA of 3.0 for graduate work. TA will not be issued if GPA falls below these thresholds. You will have to complete coursework at your own expense and provide documentation to the education center of the grades received. Once your GPA has been recalculated and meets or exceeds the applicable threshold, you will be able to utilize TA again.
- **OFFICERS** incur a 2-year ADSC from the date of the final class they used TA for
- **ANG/RESERVISTS**: If you are on active orders, we **MUST** have a copy of your orders in hand; and the dates on your orders **MUST** encompass the term dates of the class you wish to take. We cannot accept a commander's letter in lieu of orders. **Current orders must be in hand! No exceptions.** We cannot issue "Late TA" for a class. Please plan ahead
- You can apply for TA as early as 45 days prior to the start of your class. However, you **cannot apply for TA if the class begins in less than 7 days!** We cannot issue "Late TA" for a class. **PLEASE PLAN AHEAD!**

I have read through and understand the new TA rules.

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Last Four: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Location/Base where stationed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_