

Greetings,

Once again, congratulations on your selection to your respective Advanced Education Programs. I am the Advanced Education Program Administrator. Your first phone call/email for any issues, e.g. check-in, class approvals, course changes, evaluation and other items should always be to me at (202) 475-5737 and then your program manager or RFMC.

Your understanding of the following information will significantly affect your success in the program. It's a long email, good luck...

1. READ: Everything you need to know (timelines, document templates, program requirements,) is located at this site:
<http://www.uscg.mil/dcms81/adved.asp>.

On the site, "click-on" and "follow" the directions in the "Advanced Education Guide." You are required to read and comply with the Advanced Education Guide. The guide is currently being updated to reflect changes. However I have indicated the changes in this memo.

2. DPP: It is your responsibility to work with the school during the program to make sure you stay on track with courses that are approved by the Program Manager. Any deviation from your approved degree plan requires prior approval,

3. FINANCES:

(a) You are the CG's representative to the school for all payments. You will work with FORCECOM to have payments authorized and you will help the school understand how to receive payment from FINCEN. I tell you this, because we don't know that tuition has increased, or that the school hasn't received payment, or of any other financial problem unless you tell us.

(b) CG does not always pay tuition on time. This is what you can do to help us meet our obligations.

* Be early. Put in the paperwork as soon (same day) as you know the expense. If you submit your paperwork past FORCECOM deadlines, you can expect that your school will be paid late. Late fees are your responsibility if it is your fault.

* Understand the Process. If your paperwork is wrong, receipts are not submitted, unauthorized fees are added or you don't meet deadlines, you can expect delays. Communicate with the school to minimize confusion. (For example, the school must invoice FINCEN (with approved SF-182 from FORCECOM) to be paid and it can take FINCEN up to 30 days to pay the bill). All claims/reimbursements should be submitted to advancededucation@uscg.mil and a copy sent to the DCMS-81advanceded@uscg.mil. **This is the new address not listed in the AE guide.**

* You must receive authority from FORCECOM for tuition increases. FORCECOM will only approve expenses that have been previously budgeted. If tuition goes up or you run into other unexpected fees, it's not sufficient to simply submit your claim to FORCECOM and expect that they will cover

the increase; they will not. A request for tuition increase must be submitted to me accompanied by proof of the increase (web page from school or link from the school website). You must clearly indicate how much the increase is that you are requesting. I will update your Cost Share Agreement, obtain approval from FORCECOM and send you the approved copy. If you are attending a school that you have agreed to cost share do not expect the additional funds to be covered.

* Communicate. Once you've submitted your claim, follow up with FORCECOM regularly. Reach out to your Program Manager or Program Administrator whenever you need intervention with the school/FORCECOM/FINCEN.

4. CONTACT INFO (Data Capture Form) - Once in school (or sooner), provide me with your contact info (your personal email and phone#). This will be the only means by which we have to contact you. The Student Contact Form is located on the DCMS-81 website. While in school, if the contact info (that you provided to me) changes, then you must email me with your new contact info.

5. YOUR COAST GUARD CAREER

(a) You have been selected to attend school to serve the Coast Guard's needs.

(b) Your new "job" is to be a student.

(c) No one will be supervising you on a daily basis (and I'm sure that you do not require it).

(d) Caution: Although I'm sure that all of you will stay on top of your CG responsibilities (as outlined in the Advanced Education Guide), here are some common pitfalls:

* Weigh-Ins: You must weigh-in with your local SPO every Oct and Apr (you may not be prompted). You are still subject to CG weight standards while in school. In accordance with the Advanced Education Guide and CG Weight Standards, we remove students for failing to comply with the CG weight program.

* Classes: If you run into trouble in a class, email me immediately. Failure to do so will have a negative impact. Students have been removed for academic failure or withdrawing from courses without prior approval.

* OER (Officers): It is your responsibility to submit your DUINS OER correctly. You may not be prompted. **Follow the instructions in the DUINS Guide on the OPM-1 website. (This is currently being updated to reflect in the Advanced Education Guide).** All DUINS OER's are due June 30th, to me. **DO NOT sign them and DO NOT send them to the Program Manager for signature. I have to review them before they are routed for**

processing. Make sure you send your grades or unofficial transcript with your OER.

* Issues: If you have an issue, address it with me early so that we can work together to resolve it. Don't let me find out in any other way than from you.

* Grades: Ensure that you obtain the best grades possible, especially if you'll be looked at for promotion while in school. The Advanced Education Guide contains our policy on failing classes. All students are required to submit grades at the end of each semester.

* Graduation Date & Degree: You must complete a degree, and it must occur during the program window. If there is any indication that you may not receive a degree in the allotted time you are to notify me and your program manager immediately so that we may determine the best course of action. Failure to obtain a degree will result in recoupment of Coast Guard funds. Extensions in the program are not authorized.

6. COMMUNICATE, COMMUNICATE, And COMMUNICATE:

(a) Please contact me first on typical advanced education issues.

(b) Contact your Program Manager or RFMC directly anytime for career advice.

(c) Please review the Advanced Education Guide before calling with your questions. You'll get the best feedback when you call, if you start with: "I know the guide says this, but my situation is different because... please advise."

(d) If you are in trouble, I expect to be notified immediately and honestly. This is stated many times in the Advanced Education Guide and I will hold you to it. The initial conversation is probably going to be uncomfortable, but it's your job to call if you are not succeeding academically or are not meeting program guidelines. If you communicate early, we will do everything we can to help you succeed in the program. If you delay, the consequences can be harsh.

Again, congratulations. You should enjoy your time in the program.

Best Regards,
Mary K. Fuata
US Army (Retired)
DCMS-81 Advanced Education Program Administrator
(202) 475-5737