



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
2000 NAVY PENTAGON
WASHINGTON DC 20350-2000

OPNAVINST 1500.78
N12
15 Aug 2016

OPNAV INSTRUCTION 1500.78

From: Chief of Naval Operations

Subj: FLEET SCHOLARS EDUCATION PROGRAM

Ref: (a) Navy Education Strategy 2025 of 27 Feb 2013
(b) OPNAVINST 1520.23C
(c) NAVPGSCOLINST 1520.1J

Encl: (1) Sample Obligated Service Agreement

1. Purpose. To implement the Fleet Scholars Education Program (FSEP) in support of reference (a), and to establish FSEP policy, assign responsibilities, and provide amplifying guidance to references (b) and (c) for the management and execution of the FSEP.

2. Background. Education is the Navy's strategic investment to enhance the warfighting effectiveness and critical-thinking skills of career officers. FSEP provides a rich and unique opportunity to provide quality, relevant, and diverse education opportunities to the most talented officers in the unrestricted line (URL) and information warfare communities (IWC). FSEP provides community sponsors the opportunity to reward and retain top performing, career-minded officers. FSEP selectees will attend the school of their choice, in their selected field of study, for up to 24 months.

3. Policy

a. FSEP allocates 30 fully-funded graduate education opportunities each year for top performing URL and IWC officers to attend in-residence graduate school at an accredited institution of their choice. FSEP participants will be given up to 24 months to complete an accredited graduate degree while in a full-time status at any accredited institution in the United States.

b. Initial FSEP allocations are listed in table 1 by community sponsor and designator. Each year, 30 new opportunities will be available. Future allocation details will be provided in the annual advanced education quota plan.

Community	Number of Opportunities	Designator(s)
Aviation warfare	7	1310, 1320
Surface warfare	7	1110
Submarine warfare	4	1120
Naval special warfare	3	1130
Explosive ordnance disposal	3	1140
Information warfare	6	1810, 1820, 1830

Table 1

c. Distance learning is not authorized under FSEP. Additionally, graduate degrees in law and legal education and medical training are not authorized under FSEP.

4. Eligibility

a. FSEP is nominally targeted for the lieutenant (LT) pay grade; however, lieutenant commanders are eligible. Top performing lieutenant junior grade officers may be considered if promoted to LT before reporting to their school of choice for graduate education.

b. Officers who have previously received fully-funded graduate education are not eligible. This does not include graduate degrees obtained through Post-9/11 GI Bill, tuition assistance, Navy College Program for Afloat College Education, and a Service or joint college.

c. Officers who have submitted a lateral transfer package are not eligible for participation. Officers being considered must accept community service obligation with selection to FSEP.

5. Selection

a. Community sponsors are the best judge of potential and performance. Each community sponsor may select up to their annual allocated opportunities plus alternates in the fall

preceding the academic year (AY) of enrollment. This timeframe allows selected officers time to apply for graduate education at the school(s) of their choice.

b. Selection and notification should be completed in the fall preceding the enrollment year. Community sponsors must notify Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Navy Education Strategy and Policy Branch (OPNAV N127); Naval Postgraduate School (NPS); civilian institution (CIVINS) program office; and Navy Personnel Command, Graduate Education and Training Placement (PERS-440) via official correspondence of their final selectees no later than 1 December of the year preceding the AY of enrollment.

c. Primary selectees will be given 14 working days to accept or decline the offer. A non-response will be treated as a selectee declining to participate.

6. Responsibilities

a. Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Manpower, Personnel, Training and Education (CNO N1) must serve as the FSEP resource and assessment sponsor.

b. OPNAV Director, Total Force Manpower, Training and Education Requirements Division (OPNAV N12) must:

(1) Determine and publish FSEP annual opportunities in the annual advanced education quota plan.

(2) Serve as the policy waiver authority for graduate education issues.

c. Commander, Navy Personnel Command must:

(1) Generate orders and detail selectees into graduate education assignments. Permanent change of station orders will normally be for the fall term start.

(2) Assign FSEP participants the additional qualification designation of 24H for personnel tracking purposes.

d. President, NPS must:

(1) Act as academic coordinator and manager for FSEP.

(2) Administer, advise, and monitor all FSEP selectees. This includes monitoring academic performance, individual education plan (EP) approval, major field of study changes, and student load projections.

(3) Ensure selected academic programs are structured to culminate in a graduate degree in no more than 24 months.

(4) Provide FSEP degree completion data to Navy Personnel Command, Joint Matters/Subspecialty Management (PERS-450) for entry into personnel data files for degrees qualifying for subspecialty code (SSC).

(5) Negotiate with participating CIVINS, as necessary, on all matters relating to admission and enrollment of officer students and contracts for tuition and fees.

(6) Provide tuition and required fees per reference (b), and process requests for student application fees. Application fees will be reimbursed for up to three institutions. Graduate Record Exam and Graduate Management Admissions Test reimbursement will be handled by a member with Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support.

(7) Maintain a listing of current schools with education service agreements (ESA) on the NPS CIVINS Web page. The current listing of schools with an ESA can be found at: <http://www.nps.edu/Academics/CIVINS/index.html>.

e. Community sponsors must:

(1) Develop and implement selection criteria and policies for FSEP participants.

(2) Select top performers with high career potential for FSEP. Selection should be based upon, but not limited to, consistently outstanding professional performance; promotion potential; and academic background, capabilities and accomplishments.

(3) Ensure officers returning from FSEP are mentored and immediately detailed to competitive career-track training and assignments.

(4) Forward a list of all institutions that are being considered for that AY's enrollment to the NPS CIVINS office as soon as possible. This is in addition to the participant's notification to NPS of a school that does not have an ESA as listed on the NPS Web site. NPS requires sufficient time to establish a new ESA. The risk is that a student may not be able to attend the school of choice because of the long lead time in negotiating ESAs and subsequent contract placement.

(5) Prepare each FSEP participant's non-observed fitness report for signature by the community type commander.

f. FSEP selectees must:

(1) Be advised to apply to at least three graduate education institutions of their choice. Selectees will be reimbursed for up to three application fees and three transcript fees. Refer to reference (c) for reimbursement process. Starting enrollment will be for the fall term start.

(2) Consult the list of schools that have ESAs on the NPS CIVINS Web site. In the case where the school of choice is not on the ESA listing, selectee must notify the NPS CIVINS office no later than 1 February of the enrollment year. Navy fiscal policy requires that an approved school ESA be in place to allow payment through the contracting process. Points of contact for NPS CIVINS office and ESA list can be found at: <http://www.nps.edu/Academics/CIVINS/index.html>.

(3) Be responsible for meeting chosen school(s)'s admissions, application deadlines, and additional requirements that could vary by department and degree program. Selectee must ensure that the curriculum selected is an in-residence program.

(4) Provide an EP found in reference (c) to NPS CIVINS office for review. The EP will be submitted on initial notification of acceptance from school. Selectees must maintain full-time enrollment as defined by the school's curriculum. In the case where a graduate program does not provide for summer

enrollment, selectees will schedule thesis, capstone project, research, or internship for the equivalent of full-time status during this time.

(5) Consult the NPS CIVINS office for any requested changes to an approved EP. Any desired changes to course enrollments, curricula, and degree need prior approval from the NPS CIVINS office. Additionally, selectees must immediately report academic probation and failing course work to NPS CIVINS office.

(6) Be familiar with and follow guidance provided in references (b) and (c). Where there are questions or conflicts, selectees should contact the NPS CIVINS office. The notable exception to guidance found in references (b) and (c) is that FSEP does not require the Navy-funded degree to meet the educational skill requirements (ESR) of a Navy SSC. Selectees are not limited to only SSC-awarding curricula; however, earning an SSC is highly encouraged, can enhance future billet-assignment opportunities, and strengthens officer skill competencies valued by the Navy.

(7) Conduct a review of ESRs alongside their course work in an effort to identify an SSC that most closely aligns with selectee's proposed area of study. Selectees will provide input on the SSC(s) that best aligns to their program for review by the NPS CIVINS office and SSC subject matter expert(s), per reference (c). Selectees can review the list of SSCs and corresponding ESRs, found at:
<http://www.nps.edu/Academics/subspecialty-codes.html>.

(8) Maintain the high level of professional performance which resulted in their selection for FSEP. Misconduct, a decline in performance, or the failure to be selected for promotion to the next grade are examples of activity that must result in immediate review by President, NPS to determine if termination of the education opportunity is warranted.

(9) Remain in good standing with the academic institution.

(10) Per reference (c), be assigned administratively to the appropriate support element nearest to the school (i.e., Navy Reserve Officers Training Corps; Navy operational support center; personnel support detachment).

(11) Consult the naval administrative message applicable for the fiscal year in which selection is desired for program details.

7. Service Obligation. FSEP selectees must agree, by submission of an obligated service agreement (per sample in enclosure (1)), to remain on active duty for 3 years upon graduation or withdrawal from the program. An active duty obligation is incurred whether the member successfully completes the fully funded graduate degree, or fails to earn the fully funded graduate degree. Where failure to complete obligated service is the result of action not initiated by the Government, the Service member must reimburse the Government for all tuition and other education costs incurred, or proportional share, for the period of obligation not served. The Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV) may waive these requirements when such action would be in the best interest of the Naval Service, taking into consideration the recommendations and supporting justification of CNO (N1). Officers may not be relieved of their active duty obligation solely because they are willing and able to refund all payments made to them or on their behalf.

8. Records Management. Records created as a result of this instruction, regardless of media and format, must be managed per SECNAV Manual 5210.1 of January 2012.

9. Review and Effective Date. Per OPNAVINST 5215.17A, OPNAV N12 will review this instruction annually on the anniversary of its issuance date to ensure applicability, currency, and consistency with Federal, Department of Defense, SECNAV, and Navy policy and statutory authority using OPNAV 5215/40 Review of Instruction. This instruction will automatically expire 5

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years after its issuance date unless reissued or canceled prior to the 5-year anniversary date, or an extension has been granted.



R. P. BURKE
Deputy Chief of Naval Operations
(Manpower, Personnel, Training
and Education)

Releasability and distribution:

This instruction is cleared for public release and is available electronically only via Department of the Navy Issuances Web site, <http://doni.documentservices.dla.mil>

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SAMPLE OBLIGATED SERVICE AGREEMENT

From: LT First Name MI Last Name, USN, XXX-XX-LAST4/1110
To: Graduate Education and Training Placement (PERS-440)
Subj: OBLIGATED SERVICE FOR THE FLEET SCHOLAR EDUCATION PROGRAM
Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 1520.23C
(b) NAVPGSCOLINST 1520.1J
(c) OPNAVINST 1500.78

1. Per references (a) through (c), I, LT First Name MI Last Name, understand that I may attend a civilian educational institution in-residence program for up to 2 years. As a requirement for participating in this program, I agree to remain on active duty for a period of three times the length of the program, not to exceed 3 years. This does not obligate the Navy to retain me on active duty.

First Name MI Last Name

Enclosure (1)