



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
3000 MARINE CORPS PENTAGON
WASHINGTON DC 20350-3000

MCO 1700.32A
M&RA (MF)
22 Apr 2026

MARINE CORPS ORDER 1700.32A

From: Commandant of the Marine Corps
To: Distribution List

Subj: LEADERSHIP SCHOLAR PROGRAM (LSP)

Ref: See enclosure (1)

Encl: (1) References

1. Situation. To establish requirements governing the Leadership Scholar Program (LSP) and provide background information and guidance for the submission of applications for admission to those colleges and universities that participate in the LSP in accordance with references (a) through (m).

2. Cancellation. MCO 1700.32

3. Mission. The mission of the LSP is to provide academically and professionally qualified Marines with assistance in academic preparation and application process to highly selective academic institutions throughout the country in an effort to offer the most expeditious route for attainment of their respective educational goals.

4. Execution

a. Commander's Intent and Concept of Operation

(1) Commander's Intent. The LSP ensures that eligible Marines interested in pursuing an undergraduate degree at the LSP-affiliated colleges and universities receive academic preparation throughout the process. Commanders must promote the LSP as an opportunity for applicants having the desire and meeting the eligibility requirements to gain admission to a participating college or university of their choice. The LSP selects only the most competitive applicants for consideration by the college or university admission process.

(2) Concept of Operations. The LSP assists eligible Marines who are interested in pursuing an undergraduate degree at the LSP-affiliated colleges and universities.

(a) Eligibility. The LSP is for transitioning Marines who will be entering college after their End of Active Service (EAS) or Reserve Component obligated service, and for Marines who are participating in the Marine Enlisted Commissioning Education Program (MECEP) or the Staff Noncommissioned Officer Degree Completion Program (SNCODCP). Transitioning Marines must have an honorable discharge to meet the LSP eligibility requirements. The LSP Representative at the local Voluntary Education Center screens applicants for eligibility and authorizes applicants to participate in the LSP. The LSP Representative must provide advisory and counseling

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services to eligible applicants of the LSP. Transitioning applicants must begin participation no later than 12 months prior to EAS and no earlier than two years prior to EAS.

(b) Education. Marines must be a high school graduate, earned a General Educational Development (GED), or possess the educational requirement for admissions to the educational institution. Current baccalaureate degree-holders or those seeking advanced degrees do not qualify for the LSP.

(c) Characterization of Service. Marines participating in the LSP must be of outstanding moral character. Marines awarded non-judicial punishment or convicted by a court-martial in the previous 12 months are not authorized to participate in the LSP. The LSP participation is not authorized for personnel awarded a punitive discharge, in confinement, on appellate leave, awaiting a general discharge, or an administrative separation under other than honorable conditions. The LSP participants must not have a conviction by a foreign or domestic court, have served a sentence in foreign or domestic prison, or have a pending administrative discharge in lieu of a trial or court-martial. Characterization of service must be verified by the Unit Education Officer (UEO). The UEO serves as the liaison between the Commanding Officer of the command, and the installation Education Center.

(d) Tuition and Fees. The payment of tuition and all other academic fees are the responsibility of each participant. The use of GI Bill education benefits, grants, and scholarships are encouraged. The Marine Corps Tuition Assistance Program cannot be used to fund tuition once accepted and enrolled in LSP-affiliated colleges and universities.

(e) Obligated service. Candidates accepted for this program do not incur any additional obligated service based solely on participation in the LSP. However, MECEP and SNCODCP candidates may have additional service requirements in accordance with references (h) through (i).

(3) Screening. Applicants meeting LSP eligibility criteria must complete an interview process and academic and professional record review with the local LSP Representative for evaluation of applicant potential for successful college completion. The LSP Representative must provide advisory and counseling services.

(a) Interview. Participate in an interview with the local LSP Representative.

(b) Documentation. Provide required academic documentation at time of interview to include:

1. One copy of high school OR GED transcript (Unofficial).
2. One copy of college transcript (Unofficial).
3. One copy of a nationally recognized standardized tests, such as the SAT or ACT, if applicable.

4. Letter of Recommendation from the applicant's Commanding Officer, Officer-in-Charge, Staff Non-Commissioned Officer between the ranks of E-8 to E-9, or past or present postsecondary academic instructor

nominating the Marine for the program and testifying to the Marine's character.

(4) Academic / Application Preparation. The LSP Representative supports applicants throughout both their academic preparation and the college application process. This includes assisting applicants preparing for post-secondary education and guiding applicants through each step of applying to college. Applicants who are notified by the LSP Representative (via professional or personal email) of their selection to the LSP may subsequently be required to meet applicable academic standards for admission to include:

(a) Course Enrollment. Enroll in courses through a traditional or non-traditional (on-campus, online) modality.

(b) College Preparation Course. Enroll in an approved college preparation course.

(c) Grades. Maintain a grade point average of 3.75 or higher in all college coursework and earn no less than a grade of "B" in any course. Grades for MECEP and SNCODCP must be verified by the Marine Corps Recruiting Command and MMEA-85.

(5) College/University Application. Complete and submit all required documentation per college or university requirements.

(a) Application. Marines must complete and submit college or university applications through options as described on the university or college websites.

(b) College Personal Statement/ College Essays. Marines must prepare a personal statement and/or college essays and submit them to the LSP Representative for review 30 days prior to schools' application deadline.

(c) Letters of Recommendation. Marines must seek recommendation letters from the Commanding Officer, Officer-in-Charge, Staff Non-Commissioned Officer between the ranks of E-8 to E-9, or past or present postsecondary academic instructors where applicable.

(d) Supplemental Materials. Marines must gather and provide supplemental materials to the LSP Representative where applicable. Submission of the following materials is often encouraged by the college or university:

1. Resume. A resume outlining military and civilian experience and qualifications.

2. Awards/Certificates. Copies of awards or certificates from the Marine Corps or outside agencies.

3. Educational Materials. Copies of college-level assignments or project proposals.

(6) Veterans Resources. The Marine for Life Network (M4L) Program offers linkages both to the Marine Corps and to the employment, education, career/technical, and entrepreneurial opportunities that await Marines and their families. M4L has a nation-wide network of more than 70 Marine for

Life Representatives who provide location-specific network connections to education resources, employment opportunities, and other Veterans services that aid Marines in their career and life goals outside of military service. For additional information, please email m4lops@usmc.mil.

b. Subordinate Element Missions

(1) Deputy Commandant, Manpower and Reserve Affairs (M&RA) ensures overall policy compliance and oversight of the LSP.

(2) Director, Marine and Family Programs Division (MF)

(a) Develop plans, policies, procedures, and management of the LSP.

(b) Develop program marketing plans.

(c) Provide manning and oversight of daily operations of the LSP.

(d) Ensure Marines receive the LSP information at appropriate stages of the Marine For Life Cycle, tailored to their individual needs or educational plans.

(e) Establish procedures for seeking, screening, and creating written agreements with four-year, regionally accredited colleges and universities offering baccalaureate degrees and non-profit organizations that provide a significant benefit to the Marines.

(f) Manage programs using Headquarters Marine Corps identified performance management strategy including but not limited to cost, quality, utilization, accessibility, and satisfaction to inform decision making, mitigate challenges, and address needs.

(g) Conduct quality checks and support the manager's internal control program, privacy program, privileging/credentialing, and certification to ensure requirements are met in accordance with references (a) and (k).

(h) Develop and deliver Marine Corps Total Fitness capabilities, prioritize prevention, leverage and connect existing resources to enhance mission readiness, unit performance, and support the total force fitness framework in accordance with reference (j).

(i) Review this Order annually to ensure that it is necessary, current, and consistent with statutory authority. The NAVMC 10974 is utilized to record the outcome of the annual review.

(3) Installation Commanders

(a) Ensure awareness of the LSP through effective communication and marketing.

(b) Ensure Education Services Officers and other appropriate entities have an awareness of the LSP, and that eligible Marines are provided with appropriate information.

(c) Utilize the standardized training materials provided or authorized by M&RA MF for all training.

(d) Deliver Marine Corps Total Fitness capabilities, prioritize prevention, leverage and connect existing resources to enhance mission readiness, unit performance, and support the total force fitness framework in accordance with reference (j).

1. Implement promising primary prevention activities to decrease harmful behaviors and improve quality of life in accordance with 4b(2)(h) above.

2. Collaborate with other stakeholders to implement core and discretionary programs aligned to the physical, mental, spiritual, and social total fitness domains per reference (j) and the Marine Corps Total Fitness Strategic Plan.

(4) Unit Commanders. Ensure that UEOs and other appropriate entities have an awareness of the LSP, and that eligible Marines are provided with appropriate information.

5. Administration and Logistics

a. Records Management. Records created as a result of this Order shall be managed according to National Archives and Records Administration (NARA)-approved dispositions in reference (c) to ensure proper maintenance, use, accessibility and preservation, regardless of format or medium. Records disposition schedules are located on the Department of the Navy/Assistant for Administration, Directives and Records Management Division portal page at: <https://portal.secnav.navy.mil/orgs/DUSNM/DONAA/DRM/Records-and-Information-Management/Approved%20Record%20Schedules/Forms/AllItems.aspx>. Refer to reference (e) for Marine Corps records management policy and procedures.

b. Privacy Act. Any misuse or unauthorized disclosure of Personally Identifiable Information (PII) may result in both civil and criminal penalties. The Department of the Navy (DON) recognizes that the privacy of an individual is a personal and fundamental right that shall be respected and protected. The DON's need to collect, use, maintain, or disseminate PII about individuals for purposes of discharging its statutory responsibilities shall be balanced against the individuals' right to be protected against unwarranted invasion of privacy. All collection, use, maintenance, or dissemination of PII shall be in accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974, as amended [reference (1)] and implemented per references (f) and (m).

c. Forms. No forms used in the Order.

d. Records Dispositions

(1) This Order is assigned record schedule 5000-8.

(2) No records schedules are used within this Order.

e. Recommendations. Recommendations concerning the contents of this Order are welcomed and may be forwarded to M&RA MF via the appropriate chain of command.

f. Updates. Updates made to this Order must be done in accordance with the current iteration of MCO 5215.1, Marine Corps Directives Management Program.

6. Command and Signal

a. Command. This Order is applicable to the Active Component and Selected Reserve Marines.

b. Signal. This Order is effective the date signed.



W. J. BOWERS
Deputy Commandant for
Manpower and Reserve Affairs

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References

- (a) DoDI 1322.25 CH-4, "Voluntary Education Programs," April 2, 2020
- (b) MCO 1560.25
- (c) SECNAV M-5210.1
- (d) Commandant Letter May 2012
- (e) MCO 5210.11F
- (f) SECNAVINST 5211.5F
- (g) DoDI 1342.22, "Military Family Readiness," August 5, 2021
- (h) MCO 1560.21E
- (i) MCO 1040.43B
- (j) DoDI 1010.10 CH-3, "Health Promotion and Disease Prevention,"
May 16, 2022
- (k) NAVMC 1700.4
- (l) 5 U.S.C. § 552a
- (m) MCO 5211.5