

Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development System (NCOPDS)

What is it?

The NCOPDS provides non-commissioned officers (NCO) with progressive and sequential leader, technical and tactical training relevant to the duties, responsibilities and missions they will perform in operational units after graduation. The training and education process for the NCO starts with an initial, branch-immaterial, leadership development course; followed by a basic, branch-specific level; an advanced, branch specific

level; and culminates with a branch- immaterial senior level course. The NCOPDS is comprised of the following educational opportunities:

- **Basic Leader Course (BLC):** A branch-immaterial course that provides basic leadership training to allow Soldiers in the pay grade of Private First Class through Staff Sergeant (SSG) the opportunity to acquire the leader skills, knowledge and experience needed to lead team/squad size units.
- **Advanced Leader Course (ALC):** ALC consists of both an 80 hour, 90-day highly facilitated web-based common core program and a branch-specific resident phase designed for the Soldiers military occupation specialty. This course provides Soldiers selected for promotion to SSG with an opportunity to acquire the leader, technical, and tactical skills, knowledge and experience needed to lead squad/platoon size units.
- **Senior Leader Course (SLC):** A branch-specific course that provides an opportunity for Soldiers selected for promotion to Sergeant First Class (SFC) to acquire the leader, technical, and tactical skills, knowledge and experience needed to lead platoon/company size units.
- **Master Leader Course (MLC):** Specifically designed to prepare SFCs for the increase leadership and management responsibilities required prior to promotion to Master Sergeant/First Sergeant. The curriculum includes topics such as Army and Joint Doctrine; Interagency Capabilities and Considerations; Plans orders and Annexes; Decisive Actions: Military Justice Rules and Procedures; Command Inspection program; Servant leadership; Personnel Readiness; Military Decision Making Process; Public Speaking; Mil9itary Briefings and Writing.
- **Sergeants Major Course (SMC):** The capstone enlisted training for the Master Sergeant (MSG), MSG (Promotable), Sergeant Major, and Command Sergeant Major prepares them for troop and staff assignments. This course is task based and performance oriented, focusing on leadership, combat and sustainment operations, team building, communication skills, training management, and professional development. It prepares the NCO for responsibility at the Battalion and Brigade level.

What has the Army done?

The NCOPDS has undergone tremendous transformations in support of the Army's goals to develop agile leaders and afford NCOs an opportunity to acquire the skills, and knowledge needed to perform more complex duties and missions of greater responsibility. The Army continues to explore the following professional development initiatives that enhance professional military education through traditional and nontraditional

learning opportunities in support of individual and collective training:

- **Structured Self-Development (SSD):** To foster the life-long learning environment, the Army has created a defined set of required learning, which is sequenced across a Soldier's career and is linked to and synchronized with operational and institutional domains. While supporting the Life Long Learning Strategy and promoting continuous growth, SSD builds knowledge and skills through a sequence of learning approaches with the adjuncts of formal education and experiential learning. SSD is centrally managed content that must be completed at specified career points as a prerequisite for attendance at Warrior through Senior Leader courses and the Sergeant Majors Course.
- **Mobile Training Team (MTT):** The Army established MTTs for the BLC and 20 Military Occupation Specialty's (MOSSs) for ALC which allows Soldiers to train at their home stations and to improve synchronization of NCOPDS with Army Force Generation.
- **NCOPDS Transformation:** The Army has adapted NCOPDS to the needs of the Army at war by refining programs of instruction (POI) and embedding combat leaders' tasks into all NCOPDS programs. Flexibility in training has increased through distributed learning and reduction of course lengths which allow NCOs to attend and complete training at more beneficial times and locations.

What continued efforts does the Army have planned for the future?

During FY 16/17 INCOPD will finalize the NCO 2020 Strategy action plan along with the following Lines of Effort (LOE) s:

- **LOE #1 – Development:** NCOs develop as leaders over time through deliberate progressive and sequential processes incorporating training, education and experience across the operational, institutional and self-development learning domains throughout the Soldier Lifecycle. Key tasks in this LOE are: Implement select, Train, Educate and Promote (S.T.E.P.); Establish a new Career Management Model; Publish and implement a NCO PME Deferment Policy; Update Promotion Policy; Update Promotion Policy; Establish Scheduling Priorities; Integrate NCO Professional Military Education in the Army University; Establish Level VPME (Master Leader Course); Incorporate NCO General Learning Outcomes (GLO) s into education course; Develop common NCO learning content; Improve PME curriculum rigor and relevance Joint Professional Military Education into the NCOPDS; Identify and validate credential and resource examinations; Establish a Digital Job Book; Expand Army Career Tracker (ACT) capabilities ; Develop self-assessments.
- **LOE #2 – Talent Management:** The purposeful expansion of an NCOs core Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) proficiency and leadership provided through developmental positions, opportunities and assignments both within and outside of their Career Management Field (CMF). Key task in this LOE are: Expand broadening assignments and opportunities to include joint interagency assignments, fellowships, training with industry and institutional Army assignments; Improve Unit NCO Professional Development programs; Implements coherent progressive and sequential and the Army Career Tracker.
- **LOE #3 - Professionalization:** Strengthen the NCO Corps by emphasizing the role of the NCO in building and sustaining trust; Constantly improving military expertise; the Army ethic; setting an example of honorable service; Fostering a climate rich in spirit de corps and serving as stewards of the Army profession. Key task in this LOE are:

Update the NCO Creed, NCO Guide, NCO Corner, FM 6-22 and ADP-1/ADRP-1. The Profession; Establish professional reading and writing programs; Ensure promotion boards are competitive; Conduct planning for implementing a year of the NCO in 2020.

Why is this important to the Army?

The INCOPD provides an organizational structure focused on unified oversight of NCO Development. The NCOPDS is an organizing framework to develop the next generation of competent and committed NCOs of character as trusted Army professionals who thrive in chaos, adapt and win in a complex world. NCOs develop as leaders over time through deliberate progressive and sequential processes incorporating training, education and experience across the three learning domains throughout the Soldier Lifecycle. NCOPDS will rapidly adapt to changing situations seize opportunities and field innovative solution to improve the performance of every NCO.

Updated as of: 12 Oct 12 TRADOC/INCOPD
(757) 501-5394
tradoc.incopd@us.army.mil