PLAIN TALK FOR SAILORS

Licensure, Certification and Qualification

This edition of Plain Talk for Sailors highlights the benefits of earning licenses, certifications and qualifications in support of your Navy career.

What's the difference between Licenses, Certifications and Qualifications?

Licensure. Governmental agencies – federal, state, or local – grant licenses to individuals to practice a specific occupation, such as a medical license for doctors. State or federal laws and regulations define the standards that individuals must meet to become licensed. Licenses are typically mandatory.

Certification. Non-governmental agencies, associations, and private sector companies may grant certifications to individuals who meet predetermined qualifications. These qualifications are generally set by professional associations (ex., National Commission for Certification of Crane Operators) or by industry and product-related organizations (ex., Novell Certified Engineer). Certification is typically an optional credential, although some state licensure boards and some employers may require certification. For many occupations, more than one organization may offer certifications.

Qualification. A "qualification" program normally requires completion of formal and/or informal training, followed by a demonstration of the ability to perform a special skill or requirement that must be met to qualify for a particular job.

How do I get a license, certification or qualification?

Sailors have opportunities in three major programs: Navy COOL, USMAP and PQS. Read on to find out how you can improve your Navy career opportunities.

Navy Credentialing Opportunities On-Line (Navy COOL)

Navy COOL provides opportunities to all Navy enlisted, active and reserve (less Individual Ready Reserve), and select Navy officers. Navy COOL helps Sailors find information on certifications and licenses related to enlisted ratings, officer designators, collateral duties, and out of rate assignments.

Some jobs have specific professional and technical standards. Credentials – certifications and licenses – show that you meet these standards. For example, a welder can show his welding certifications to an employer to document that he has specific skills and knowledge. For a Sailor, civilian credentials are beneficial for two reasons.

1. When you transition back to civilian employment, credentials help you translate your military training and experience into something civilian employers can easily recognize. This can help you get hired, get a better job, or be promoted sooner.

2. The Navy believes that earning credentials improves Sailor professionalism. In fact, if a credential is related to your duties, the Navy will pay for the credentialing exams.

To help you identify which credentials are most career-enhancing and when you should pursue specific certifications, use your Navy Learning and Development Roadmap (LaDR). Go to Navy Knowledge Online (NKO) > Career Management > Enlisted Learning and Development (LaDR) or log into NKO at https://wwwa.nko.navy.mil/ and click HERE.

How do I request funding for a certification or license exam?

1. Go to the Navy COOL website at https://www.cool.navy.mil to review the "COOL Overview".

2. Review "Must Read FAQs" for Navy-funded examples of certifications earned.

3. When ready, return to the "Home" page and begin with Step 1.

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United Services Military Apprenticeship Program (USMAP)

USMAP provides opportunities for enlisted members of the Sea services serving on active duty to complete a civilian apprenticeship program using military work hours. Upon successful completion of the apprenticeship, the U.S. Department of Labor issues a "Certificate of Completion of Apprenticeship." This certificate does not expire.

USMAP is a formal military training program that provides the opportunity to improve job skills and complete civilian apprenticeship requirements while on active duty. The program combines on-the-job training (OJT) and related technical instruction received during formal training, such as "A" and "C" School. USMAP is free and requires no off-duty hours.

You can become an apprentice if you meet the following minimum requirements:

- Are active duty Navy
- Are assigned to and are performing duties in an authorized trade occupation
- Have completed an "A" school (PACT Sailors are not eligible for USMAP until they have successfully completed "A" School)
- Possess a high school diploma or GED
- Have sufficient time to complete the program while on active duty

Completing one or more USMAP apprenticeships is career enhancing.

- After completing your apprenticeship program, the U.S. Department of Labor issues a "Certificate of Completion of Apprenticeship." This means that you have completed the industry-wide required number of classroom and on-the job training requirements for a specific trade.
- Using your Certificate of Completion, you can formally document professional knowledge and skills in your Navy performance evaluation (for review by Selection Board members) and add your achievement to your civilian resume.

How do I enroll in USMAP?

1. Go to the USMAP website at https://usmap.cnet.navy.mil, click the "Trades" tab, click the "Navy Rates" hyperlink, and then click rate and rating to view your options.
2. Request a Career Development Board with your Command Career Counselor and chain of command to discuss your options and ensure you enroll in the correct trade for your rating.
3. When ready to enroll, return to the USMAP website and click the "Enroll/Reinstate" tab.
4. Read the "Notice of Required Reading" and review the National Standards of Apprenticeship.
5. When finished, click "Continue" to begin the New Apprentice Registration process.
6. After successful registration, you will receive an email from the USMAP Registrar.

Personnel Qualification Standards (PQS)

The Navy PQS Program is used by officer and enlisted personnel to obtain the minimum level of competency required to perform specific duties. Through the PQS Program, Sailors demonstrate that they are qualified for watch standing or to perform other routine duties necessary for the safety, security or proper operation of a ship, aircraft or support system.

- The PQS Program, governed by OPNAVINST 3500.34G, standardizes Navy qualifications and guides personnel to successful completion.
- Examples of PQS includes Damage Control, 3M, Warfare designation (officer and enlisted), Master Training Specialist, Engineering, Deck, Anti-Submarine Warfare, Combat Systems, Aviation, Logistics, and more.
- View the current PQS Catalog, download PQS documents, and view guidance for developing Job Qualification Requirements (JQRs) at NKO > Career Management > Personnel Qualification Standards or log into NKO at https://wwwa.nko.navy.mil/ and click HERE.

Documenting your Training and Experience

Your licenses, certifications and qualifications are recorded in multiple locations and you must closely monitor each one to verify accuracy and completeness.

- Report your achievements to the following:
  - For your **Electronic Service Record (ESR)**: Submit certification and qualification documentation to your supporting Personnel Office or Personnel Support Detachment (PSD) via your Command PASS Coordinator (CPC).
  - For your **Electronic Training Jacket (ETJ)** and **Joint Service Transcript (JST)**: Submit "Certified True Copies" or "Notarized" copies of your license or credential completion certificate to your local Navy College Office.

IMPORTANT: *Until further notice, be advised that training, certification and qualification information documented in RADM and ASM is NOT recorded in your Electronic Service Record (ESR) and is NOT printed on documents submitted to OMPF. Therefore, when preparing for Selection Board Review, you should print RADM, ASM and FLTMPS (ETJ) documents, highlight your significant achievements and enclose with your Letter to the Board.*

Verifying documentation in your Personnel Records

You must closely monitor your Personnel Records to verify that your career achievements are documented properly. Work with your Personnel Office or PSD to update missing information.

About every 12-18 months, verify the following records:

- **Electronic Service Record (ESR)** – displays training, certifications and qualifications data entered into the Navy Standard Integrated Personnel System (NSIPS). At reenlistment and separation, your Training Summary is printed as form NAVPERS 1070/881 and submitted for permanent retention in your **OMPF**. Access ESR here: https://nsips.nmci.navy.mil/.
- **Official Military Personnel File (OMPF)** – the NAVPERS 1070/881 located in OMPF is an important document reviewed by Enlisted Selection Boards when making advancement determinations. Access OMPF via BUPERS Online: https://www.bol.navy.mil.
- **Electronic Training Jacket (ETJ)** – displays training, certifications and qualifications data maintained in the Fleet Training Management and Planning System (FLTMPS). Some (but not all) FLTMPS data is also sent to NSIPS for documentation in your ESR. Access ETJ via Navy Knowledge Online (NKO) > Learning > Electronic Training Jacket.
- **Joint Service Transcript (JST)** – displays military education, training and experience for personnel who entered the service after 1981. Access JST here: https://jst.doded.mil/smart/.
- Officers also should verify documentation in their **Officer Summary Report (OSR)**. Access OSR via BUPERS Online: https://www.bol.navy.mil.

When separating from the Navy, verify the following documents:

- **Verification of Military Experience and Training (VMET) (DD Form 2586)** – lists military job experience, training history, and civilian equivalent job titles. Command Career Counselors are responsible for providing this document to transitioning service members.
- **Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty (DD Form 214)** – documents authoritative information used by civilian and governmental agencies to validate veteran eligibility for benefits. It is issued to every service member at time of discharge.

IMPORTANT: *You must be proactive and take necessary actions to verify ALL of your personnel records are current, accurate and complete. Doing so will ensure your career achievements are available when reviewed for advancement, selection for retention or special programs, and/or assignment to desired jobs.*

*Download the **Personnel Records Review** user aid from the Navy Personnel Command (NPC) Career Toolbox page. Go to http://www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/career/toolbox/Pages/default2.aspx or click HERE.*

This Sailor user aid is a product of the OPNAV N1 Fleet Introduction Team with support from NETC N3, NETC N5, CPPD and CID. Please address comments and feedback to elizabeth.mcgrath@navy.mil.

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