

DOD CIVILIAN COOL PROGRAM EXPLAINED

DoD Civilian Credentialing Opportunities On-Line



Popular DoD Civilian COOL Programs

CompTIA certifications

- A+
- Network+
- Security+
- Cybersecurity Analyst (CySA)+
- PenTest+
- CASP+
- Linux+

(ISC)² certifications

- Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP)
- Information Systems Security Architecture Professional (ISSAP)
- Information Systems Security Engineering Professional (ISSEP)
- Information Systems Security Management Professional (ISSMP)
- Certified Authorization Professional (CAP)
- Certified Cloud Security Professional (CCSP)
- Certified Secure Software Lifecycle Professional (CSSLP)

ISACA certifications

- Certified Information Systems Auditor (CISA)
- Certified Information Security Manager (CISM)
- Certified in Risk and Information Systems Control (CRISC)
- Certified in the Governance of Enterprise IT (CGEIT)
- Certified Data Privacy Solutions Engineer (CDPSE)

IAPP certifications

- Certified Information Privacy Professional/United States (CIPP/US)
- Certified Information Privacy Manager (CIPM)
- Certified Information Privacy Technologist (CIPT)

Other certifications

- Cisco Certified Network Associate (CCNA)
- EC-Council Certified Ethical Hacker (CEH)
- ITIL Foundations
- Microsoft Azure
- PMI Project Management Professional (PMP)
- Red Hat Certified System Administrator (RHCSA)

Program Overview

Department of Defense (DoD) Credentialing Opportunities On-Line (COOL) is the result of extensive inter-Service collaboration to facilitate credentialing of Service members. All Services recognize the important role that occupational credentials can play in professionalizing the Force and in enhancing the Service member's ability to transition to the civilian workforce upon completion of military service. The Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps and Coast Guard each have their own Service-specific COOL programs designed to match military occupations to civilian credentials (occupational certifications, licenses, and apprenticeships) and provide resources to help Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and Coast Guardsmen attain these credentials. The Services disseminate this information on their own COOL websites. DoD COOL is the umbrella site providing a single point of access to the Services' COOL websites.

In addition, DoD COOL includes the following features:

- DoD Civilian COOL – Built from the same mold as its sister sites, DoD Civilian COOL helps federal civilian employees find detailed information on certifications and licenses related to their federal jobs. They can also use DoD Civilian COOL to get background information on credentialing and related topics.
- Military Occupations Explorer – Learn how military occupations related to each other among the military branches, to civilian occupations and to civilian credentials.

Many civilian jobs, and federal occupations, have certain professional and technical standards. Obtaining credentials – certifications and licenses – shows that you meet these standards. For example, a human resource professional can show his or her HR certifications to an employer to document that attainment of specific skills and knowledge in that occupational area. In the civilian world, credentials may be required for a job, can make you much more likely to be hired for a job, or can increase your promotion and salary potential. The same can be said for many federal occupations (e.g. Cyberspace Information Technology/Cybersecurity Workforce (Cyber IT/CSWF)); DoD Financial Management workforce; most medical occupations, etc.

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Steps Detailed and Important Active Links

COOL plays a role in a four-step credentialing process, but some steps require you to reach out to the credentialing agency or exam vendor. The four basic steps are described below.

Step 1 – Find and Select Related Credentials

Search by Federal Occupation... Use COOL's Find feature to see how your federal occupational duties match up with civilian credential requirements. It's easy to use and you can search by federal occupational series code or title. Often there are lots of credentials out there related to your federal job so it is important that you research them carefully to determine which ones you would like to earn. Consider the following:

Experience and Background – Your service in the federal government is a great asset to you and will set you up nicely to attain the credentials you want. When you are searching, you will do so based on factors associated with your federal occupational series.

Timing – Civilian credentials have varying requirements. Some are more suited to entry level positions while others are more oriented to individuals who have some years of experience. Accordingly, some credentials are better attempted at certain phases in your federal career. No matter the path you choose, consider how long the credential might take to achieve as a part of your decision-making process.

Step 2 – Learn the Credential's Requirements

Credential agencies may have education, training, experience, and other requirements associated with a credential. Find out if you are good to go or not by reviewing all of the eligibility requirements for the particular credential. To learn more about credential eligibility requirements, go to [How are Credential Requirements Determined?](#) Then, go to the credentialing agency website to learn how to apply.

Review the Credential on COOL

- Look for the credentials marked as Most (directly related) or Some (skill related) in the Related Credentials table on your federal occupational series summary page. These credentials have the most potential for you to take advantage of the training and education you've attained in your career.
- Click on the credential name in the table to open up a [Credential Snapshot page](#). The Snapshot pages contain a description of the credential, a summary and detailed information on the credential requirements, and links to the credentialing agency's web page for additional information.
- Review the Summary and Eligibility tabs on the snapshot page to get an overview of what is required by the credentialing agency (on the Summary tab) and specific details (on the Eligibility tab), if applicable. Credentialing boards determine the requirements for licensure and certification. Typically, they require a combination of the following:
 - Education
 - Training
 - Work or professional experience
 - Examinations
 - Other unique job-related requirements

Contact the Credentialing Agency

- Confirm applicable licensure or certification requirements and request application forms and exam preparation materials if available.
- Determine if your education, training, and experience is accepted by the credentialing agency and determine what additional steps, if any, you need to take to become licensed or certified.

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Steps Detailed and Important Active Links Continued

Step 3 – Learn About Available Resources

Most certifications and licenses have fees associated with them that are charged by the credentialing board or agency such as application fees, exam fees, and annual maintenance fees. In addition, you may need to pay for additional training or education if you do not meet the requirements set by a credentialing board or certification agency. To prepare for a credential, consider the following questions:

- Do I need additional training and experience to qualify for licensure or certification?
- Do I need financial assistance to pay for additional training or for credentialing exam fees?

If you are a Department of Navy (DON) civilian in the Cyberspace Information Technology/Cybersecurity Workforce (Cyber IT/CSWF), [Navy COOL](#) may fund for application fees, exam fees. However, for any other DoD civilian occupation, there currently is not funding for costs associated with initial credential attainment and maintaining and renewing the credential. There may be resources available at the local organization/command/unit level, however, to help cover some of the other costs associated with credentialing.

If you are a member of the National Guard or Reserves or a former Service member, there may be resources available to help cover some of the costs associated with credentialing. For example, eligible Service members and Veterans can use the GI Bill® to pay for fees for approved civilian occupational licensing and certification exams. GI Bill® benefits can also be used for costs associated with an undergraduate degree at a college or university, a certificate or diploma from a business, technical or vocational school, training programs, and apprenticeships.

Refer to the COOL [Costs and Funding page](#) for more information.

Step 4 – Apply for and Take Exam

It is important to note that DoD Civilian COOL is **not** a credentialing organization – you do not sign up for or take exams from COOL. Once you have selected a credential, reviewed its requirements, and obtained any additional training or experience needed, you are ready to apply for and take the credentialing exam.

Register for Exam

Use the credentialing agency links provided on the Credential Snapshot pages to go to the agency's website to register for an exam. Follow the credentialing board's application procedures which often include:

- Submitting an application
- Submitting documentation of training and experience
- Possibly paying application and exam fees

Schedule and Take Exam

Once you are registered for an exam, you need to schedule the exam and then take it. You can schedule exams through the credentialing agency, or use a commercial test vendor, some of which are listed below.

You can find test vendor information for a specific credential, where available, here on COOL on a credential's information page.

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