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## **Early application is key for Tuition Assistance approval**

PENSACOLA, Fla. – Sailors applying for Tuition Assistance (TA) are reminded that their chances of success are increased substantially by submitting requests early; helping to avoid delays in their college plans.

According to Ernest D’Antonio, the Naval Education and Training Professional Development Technology Center’s Voluntary Education (VOLED) program director, the number one reason for TA request disapproval is late applications.

“No one wants to deny a request, but service members must obtain approval for TA funding before the official start of a course,” said D’Antonio. “It’s a multi-step process, and if we find a problem, the request gets held-up until we can fix it. It’s crucial for commands to make sure that their Sailors know to start the process early – so that TA applications can be completed by the VEC in advance of the deadline.”

D’Antonio suggests that 30 days prior to the course start date is not too soon for members to start their TA requests.

“Applications are funded on a first-come, first-served basis,” he added.

“There’s no risk to applying early; we can modify or cancel the TA voucher after the fact with no harm to the Sailor, but if you submit the TA request after classes have started, , there’s nothing we can do.”

Supervisor for the VEC, Susan Sutter, detailed the required steps that must be taken before a TA request can be approved. Sailors must: 1) Be counseled by their local Navy College Office (NCO) or the VEC, 2) WebTA training must be completed, 3) An education/degree plan must be on file (with the course that the Sailor is requesting TA for included in the plan), and 4) The Sailor's command must approve the TA request.

"Additionally, Sailors must have completed at least 12 months onboard their first permanent duty station, have no missing grades, not owe the Navy any funds for incomplete or failed courses, and have an end-of-obligated service date after the course ends," Sutter said.

Both D'Antonio and Sutter also stressed that Sailors should monitor their account through the MyEducation portal on the Navy College website to ensure their accounts are posted and accurate and that their degree plans are current.

If a Sailor or his/her command have any questions or experience any problems, they should contact their servicing NCO or the VEC for assistance. The VEC is open from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. Eastern Standard Time Monday – Friday and may be reached by calling: 1-(877) 838-1659.

For more information on the Navy College Program and the Virtual Education Center visit <https://www.navycollege.navy.mil/>.

Additional information about the Naval Education and Training Command can be found via <https://www.netc.navy.mil>.

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Story by Ed Barker, Naval Education and Training Command Public Affairs

