



PUBLIC AFFAIRS

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
DEFENSE MEDIA ACTIVITY
DEFENSE INFORMATION SCHOOL
6500 MAPES ROAD
FORT MEADE, MD 20755-5620

Public Affairs & Communication Strategy Qualification Course Course

Students attending the Public Affairs & Communication Strategy Qualification Course (PACS-Q) should adhere to the following guidance. This course guide is meant to serve as an academic introduction to PACS-Q. For administrative and service specific information, please follow the links included at the end of this document to each respective service's welcome letters. The welcome letter will include more information on billeting, service requirements, meals, uniform, pay, medical, rental cars and travel contacts for your respective service below.

Read and follow this course guide in detail as it contains information and actions that require student attention before, during, and after the course.

PRIOR TO ARRIVAL

Student communication with the Defense Information School prior to arrival always starts with the Registrar's Office (dma.meade.dinfos.list.registrar@mail.mil). Students may have service specific or course related questions, and will be directed to the appropriate authority inside the school if the question cannot be answered by the Registrar.

Ensure the following are completed by the report date.

- Read the pre-course PACS-Q materials attached to the "Welcome Email" from the Registrar's Office, which is sent 30 days prior to the course start date. See <https://www.dinfos.dma.mil/> in Course Catalog/PACS-Q.
- Prepare for any Service-specific requirements. See links below.
- Send Reasonable Accommodations to DINFOS 30 days prior to course start date. See REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS section below.

ARRIVAL

The report date is not the same as the course start date. The report date is one day prior to the course start date. Upon reporting, students will check-in for initial accountability with their respective detachments listed below. At 0730, on the course start date, students will gather at the back parking lot entrance of the Defense Information School for initial check-in and begin in-processing. See map guide sent to you for directions to Fort George G. Meade.

LATE ARRIVALS:

Students arriving late risk losing their course reservation to a person on the standby list. If you are going to be late reporting in, contact the DINFOS Registrar's Office at (301) 677-4343.



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DURING THE COURSE

Course Overview

At the entry-level, Public Affairs Officers, senior noncommissioned officers and civilians attend the newly launched and redesigned PACS-Q course. The three-month course is divided into three functional areas. **Functional area 1 [Foundations]** is 23 training days of a flipped-classroom instruction model (self-study followed by instruction and demonstration), foundational studies, which include communication theory and planning, research and analysis, issues management, media engagement, public affairs writing, joint planning and communication integration in military operations. **FA 2 [Scenario]** is 10 training days in an immersive exercise scenario during which students act as public affairs/communication strategy officers focused on steady-state and event-driven injects. **FA 3 [Integration]** is seven training days of culminating activities, reflection and forward thinking during which students are required to submit a portfolio of communication products and deliver a capabilities board, where they will present their work and persuasively articulate their value to a board of instructors. **PACS-Q is rigorous and demanding**, focused on staff coordination and operational planning.

Normal classroom hours are 8:55 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. There are no evening or weekend classroom hours; however, students may have class assignments that require attention after 4:30 p.m. on school days and weekends. Students should plan on spending approximately 2-3 hours each weekday, after class, on homework and reading. Some weekend time will also be consumed by homework and class requirements. On the afternoon of Day 1, all PACS-Q students will take the English & Writing Proficiency Test (EWPT). The EWPT is designed to assess a student's use of standard written English and their ability to assemble facts into a coherent written argument. Students will have an hour and a half to complete the test, which includes two sections: English Usage and Writing. The first part of the test, which is timed at 30 minutes, presents grammar, sentence structure and punctuation problems in a multiple-choice format. The second part of the test, which is timed at 60 minutes, requires each student to compose an essay in response to a prompt. Each student will be encouraged to use examples from his or her personal and professional experience to support a thesis. Any students who do not achieve a passing score will be offered remediation and will be scheduled for a retest. Anyone who does not pass the EWPT on the second attempt may be academically eliminated from PACS-Q.

Key Course Events

The course includes a day trip, contingent upon supportability, to the Pentagon as part of the Service Unique course curriculum. Students may drive, carpool or use public transportation (MARC/Metro). Students should keep all receipts for reimbursement on their final travel voucher. Service representatives can provide more information on that visit.

Graduation is scheduled for mid-day of the last day of the course, and it is a mandatory formation. Do not schedule your return flight any earlier than 5 p.m. the day of graduation. You will not be released early to accommodate a flight booked prior to 5 p.m. Guests are currently permitted to attend the graduation ceremony.



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REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS

The reasonable accommodation process begins when an employee, applicant, or their representative requests, due to a disability, an adjustment or modification that will enable the individual to perform the essential functions of the position. If a student requires reasonable accommodations, please inform the Registrar (dma.meade.dinfos.list.registrar@mail.mil) **30 days prior to arrival** so the Registrar's Office can work with the DINFOS training department and logistics to provide needed resources on Training Day 1.

PACS ABSENCE POLICY:

Absences for non-emergency, personal reasons are not normally approved. Clear your schedule now. Absence requests will be reviewed individually and granted for emergencies only. Refer to the **course syllabus** for more details on the official schoolhouse policy.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

Students are not required to bring a computer, but it is encouraged to have one at your disposal. **Students will be provided a DINFOS-issued laptop on Day 1.** Wi-Fi will be available inside of DINFOS. If a student brings a laptop, it should be loaded with a web browser (preferably Google Chrome) that can support the Google file sharing suite. The Google Suite is also used as the primary form of electronic communication between PACS-Q faculty and students. PACS-Q students will be using Blackboard as the primary course delivery method. Students are given an overview of Blackboard use.

Cell Phones

Students may possess cellular phones and wireless devices within DINFOS facilities but may only use them in areas specifically designated for their use. Phones will remain stowed during instruction.

REPORTING TO YOUR SERVICE DETACHMENTS

U.S. Marine Corps:

Bldg. 8545, 6th Armored Cavalry Rd., Fort Meade, MD 20755 Phone:
(301) 677-7662/5188

Website: www.dinfos.dma.mil/Student-Info/Service-In-processing/Marines/

U.S. Navy: Bldg. 8479, 6th Armored Cavalry Rd., Fort Meade, MD 20755 Phone: (301)
677-6260/6283/6287

Website: www.dinfos.dma.mil/Student-Info/Service-In-processing/Navy/

U.S. Air Force: Bldg. 8478, 6th Armored Cavalry Rd., Fort Meade, MD 20755
Phone: (301) 677-5053/5039/5055

Website: www.dinfos.dma.mil/Student-Info/Service-In-processing/Air-Force/



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U.S. Army: Bldg. 8606, 6th Armored Cavalry Rd., Fort Meade, MD 20755 Phone: (301) 677-6167

Website: <https://www.dinfos.dma.mil/Student-Info/Service-In-processing/Army/>

Coast Guard: Bldg. 8545, 6th Armored Cavalry Rd., Fort Meade, MD 20755 Phone: (510) 890-6086

Website: www.dinfos.dma.mil/Student-Info/Service-In-processing/Coast-Guard/

TRANSCRIPTS

For information about transcripts: <https://www.dinfos.dma.mil/Academics/Transcripts/>

QUESTIONS

Prior to arrival, students may contact the DINFOS Registrar's Office at dma.meade.dinfos.list.registrar@mail.mil

Strength Through Truth