

Public Affairs Qualification Course

Welcome!

This course provides entry-level public affairs training for mid-grade to senior non-commissioned officers and commissioned officers from all U.S. Armed Forces and select foreign nations, as well as U.S. government agency civilians. This course will ensure that you are capable of performing the basic duties of military public affairs practitioners.

You can expect full work days and after-hours work on group projects while you are here. Please keep that in mind as you schedule off-duty activities. No classes, however, are scheduled on the weekend.

This letter is meant to help you plan your trip. If you have received conflicting information, we strongly recommend that you clarify that information with the Registrar at dma.meade.dinfos.list.academic-records@mail.mil.

Technology Requirements

You are not required to bring a computer. We will provide you with a desktop computer for in-school use and an iPad for in-school and after-hours use. Wi-Fi will be available inside of DINFOS. If you do bring a computer, it should be loaded with Microsoft Word, PowerPoint and a web browser (preferably Google Chrome).

We will be using Google Classroom as one of our course delivery methods. If you are unfamiliar with Google Classroom, we will give you an overview of its use.

Reasonable Accommodations

If you require reasonable accommodations, please inform the Registrar (dma.meade.dinfos.list.academic-records@mail.mil) as soon as possible so they can work with the training department and logistics to provide needed resources on training day one.

Uniform and clothing requirements

DINFOS military students are expected to maintain their personal appearance in accordance with applicable service regulations. As officers and senior enlisted personnel, you are role models for the junior students in both appearance and conduct. Civilians are expected to be professional in appearance.

For daily wear:

- All Services: Flight suits are not an authorized uniform at DINFOS.
- Army: ACU.

- Marine Corps: Woodland MARPAT.
- Navy: Service Khaki NWU.
- Air Force: ABU.
- Coast Guard: ODU.
- Civilians: Business casual. No jeans.

For graduation:

- Summer (generally when Daylight Saving Time is in effect):
 USA: Class B with ribbons.
 USMC: Service "A."
 USN: Summer White with ribbons.
 USAF: Service Uniform "Blues."
 USCG: Tropical Blue.
 Civilians: Conservative business suit.
- Winter (generally when Standard Time is in effect):
 USA: Army Service Uniform.
 USMC: Service "A."
 USN: Service Dress Blue.
 USAF: Service Dress.
 USCG: Service Dress Blue "Bravo."
 Civilians: Conservative business suit.

Directions to Fort Meade

The address for DINFOS is: 6500 Mapes Road, Fort Meade, MD, 20755.

You will need a valid DoD identification card to enter the base.

Caution: Mapping software like Google Maps may recommend a route through an unauthorized part of the base (i.e., National Security Agency). Do not proceed past signs saying "NSA EMPLOYEES ONLY." Even with a DOD ID card, you are not allowed to traverse through NSA areas, and you may be detained. To be safe, we recommend you enter through one of these three gates: Reece Road (main gate on the northeast part of the base); Rockenbach Road, also known as MD-713 or Route 713 (on the northern part of the base); or Mapes Road, off of MD-32 or Route 32 (on the southern part of the base).

Flying: If you arrive by commercial air, we recommend you fly into Baltimore/Washington International Airport (BWI). Fort George G. Meade is about 10 miles south of the airport. Military transportation is not available. Taxi service is available from BWI to Fort Meade at an estimated cost of \$20 for one person. A rental car may be beneficial if it is authorized on your orders.

The other two major airports in the region, Ronald Reagan Washington National (DCA) and Washington Dulles International (IAD) airports, are a considerable distance from Fort Meade. Taxi fare from DCA is approximately \$65, while a taxi from IAD can run as high as \$150.

Billeting

Candlewood Suites (an IHG hotel) is located on Fort Meade. Please contact them for reservations (<https://m.ihg.com/hotels/armyhotels/us/en/home>). If lodging is full, they will work with you to secure reservations at a hotel located off post.

If you encounter problems with your reservation, or have other questions about billeting, please contact your appropriate military detachment.

Rental cars

The Candlewood Suites hotel on base is located within walking distance of DINFOS. However, if you're billeted outside of the installation, a rental car is strongly recommended.

Health Care

Kimbrough Ambulatory Care Center, located on Fort Meade, is not a full-service hospital and may not be able to provide the health care you require. However, Walter Reed Army Medical Center and the hospital at Andrews Air Force Base are within driving distance. If you have specific health care issues, it would be best to call Kimbrough Ambulatory Care Center and/or your regional Tricare representative before you arrive.

For government civilians who are enrolled in a health benefits plan, most plans are accepted at civilian facilities in this area. It is strongly recommended that you contact your insurance provider prior to arrival, in case medical care is needed while you are away from home. Ensure you bring an adequate supply of any prescription medications.

Reporting to your service detachment

All military students (civilian and uniformed) must in-process with their service detachment. You will receive more information from your faculty on the first day regarding service detachment in-processing. Ensure you bring several copies of your orders.

Army students PT test/weigh-in

All regular Army, Army National Guard and Army Reserve students are required to meet the Army's body-fat standards as outlined in AR 600-9. Students must wear their Army PT uniform (shorts, t-shirt, white socks and sneakers) for the weigh-in. Bring any temporary or permanent

physical profiles with you.

PAQC is an MOS-producing course, and therefore all students will be required to complete and pass a PT test during the course. For further information on this requirement, please contact the Fort Meade Army Detachment.

Class Information

Report to the Defense Information School and be in the classroom no later than 7:55 a.m. the first day of class. Specific classroom information will be on the TV located inside the student entrance (northwest entrance).

Late arrivals: Students arriving late risk losing their course reservation to a person on the “standby” list. If you are going to be late, contact the DINFOS Registrar’s Office at 301-677-4648.

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.

Graduation ceremony: Graduation is scheduled for the afternoon of the last day of the course, and it is a mandatory formation. If you are flying out, do not schedule your return flight any earlier than 6:00 p.m. the day of graduation.

Dining facility/Commissary/Exchange use

Civilian students wishing to use the dining facility, the commissary or the post exchange will need to submit a copy of their orders (in addition to the orders submitted to service detachments) to be endorsed by the registrar’s office.

Pay

Ensure your pay is properly arranged through your unit/organization before you arrive. There is no finance center located on Fort Meade.

Questions?

Please work with your training POC in your organization with any questions or concerns. You can also contact the DINFOS Registrar office and your student service detachment on Fort Meade for any orders/logistics/service-related concerns.