



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

Welcome to the Intermediate Public Affairs Specialist Course

DESCRIPTION

This course offers intermediate Public Affairs and Communications Strategy and Operations professionals, both military and civilian, a challenging academic curriculum designed to develop students during their transition from content producer to strategic thinker and leader in the joint public affairs and strategic communications environment.

KEY COURSE EVENTS

The course features full-duty-days of lecture, discussion, practical exercise, assignments, structured lab time and mentorship opportunities. This is an intensive 10-day instruction period and off-duty hours of academic research and writing will be required. Homework should be expected on most evenings. This can range from read-ahead material study to group/individual assignments.

Class hours are 7:55 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. EST. There is no anticipated formal instruction during the evenings or on the weekend.

Students will work in small teams composed of their fellow PA/CommStrat classmates, (both military and civilian) to create a communication strategy implementation plan. This plan will be scenario-based and will focus on the research, planning, implementation and evaluation (RPIE) process of solving a communication problem. The implementation strategy will be presented to a command team who will evaluate the potential effectiveness in solving the command's communication problem.

During a scenario based assessment, students will individually build elements of proposed public affairs guidance (PPAG) refining their ability to create messages, themes and talking points. Students will create comments for leadership and refine guidelines and review requirements for executing public affairs guidance within a command. During the scenario, students will also work in small teams to facilitate engagement with the local community and media. This will include facilitating a media engagement with a local reporter and selecting and preparing a subject-matter-expert for cradle to grave engagement.

Throughout the course, instructors will lead discussions in PA and the Information Environment, Ethics, Release of Information, Issues Management, and Social Media. Students should be prepared to contribute to the group discussion daily and share experiences as they relate to class interaction. This course is as interactive and collaborative as it is educational.

An informal graduation takes place on the final training day. Do not schedule flights departing from Baltimore/Washington International (BWI) Thurgood Marshall Airport prior to 1800 on the final training day. You will not be released early.

ITEMS TO CONSIDER

This is a unique opportunity to participate in a scenario based exercise designed to stress and test your PA/CommStrat skill sets. You will be called upon to execute fundamental public affairs duties, exercise strategic thinking, perform complex problem solving, anticipate and guide

course of action development, conduct public affairs planning, and make public affairs recommendations.

Sharing experiences and best practices with your fellow students is one of the benefits of attending the course. Feel free to share material from your present and previous assignments/experiences that you may find useful during the exercises and discussions.

EQUIPMENT AND TECHNOLOGY

You are not required to bring a computer, but it is encouraged if you have one at your disposal. **You will be provided a DINFOS-issued laptop on Day 1.** 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).

Students who have not used Google apps, such as Google email, Classroom, Hangouts, documents, etc., please watch the first four minutes of this [introductory video](#). Students will receive an @dinfos.edu email address, which will provide access to these Google apps during the course.

Students must have completed their annual Cyber Security Awareness Challenge in order to access DINFOS computer systems. **Please have both a hard copy and access to an electronic copy available on Training Day One.**

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS

If you require reasonable accommodations, please inform the Registrar (dma.meade.dinfos.list.academic-records@mail.mil) as soon as possible so the office 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. Civilians are expected to be professional in appearance.

For Daily Wear:

- All Services: Current Duty Uniform. Flight suits are not an authorized uniform at DINFOS. See service specific guidelines at: [uniform policies](#)
- Civilians: Business casual. No jeans.

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.

DIRECTIONS TO FORT GEORGE G. 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/LODGING

Candlewood Suites (an IHG Hotel) is located on Fort Meade. Please contact them directly at 410-674-7700 for reservations. If you are Active-Duty Army, ARNG, and USAR you should already have a reservation in the system. All other branches, ie. Air Force, Navy, Marines, Coast Guard and Civilians will be required to make individual reservations.

If lodging is full, the Candlewood staff will provide a list of approved off post lodging. If you encounter problems with your reservation, or have other questions about billeting, please contact your appropriate military detachment.

Please note: All MARINE E5s and below, with the exception of those physically stationed at Ft. Meade will be issued a barracks room and meal card for the duration of their course. Per MCO 10110.47A, any Marine receiving ComRats will have them suspended during this period.

INPROCESSING

Please follow your service specific instructions for prior-service members. These instructions are provided at dinfos.dma.mil under "STUDENT INFO"

RENTAL CARS

Rental Cars are unit funded. The Candlewood Suites hotel on base is located within walking distance of DINFOS. However, if you are 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 National Military Medical Center and the hospital at Andrews Air Force Base are within driving distance. If you have specific healthcare 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. You may have to change your Tricare region prior to arrival at Fort Meade. Ensure you bring an adequate supply of any prescription medications.

DINING FACILITY

All Service members on TDY orders MUST follow their orders in regards to MEALS and LODGING. Per Diem is typically not authorized for those lodged on base.

PAY

Ensure your pay is properly arranged through your unit/organization before you arrive. There is a very limited 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 dma.meade.dinfos.list.academic-records@mail.mil and your [student service detachment](#) on Fort Meade for any orders, logistics, and or service-related concerns.

We look forward to working with you during IPASC. Your instructors are experienced, demanding, and dedicated to ensuring you have an enriching experience and complete this course equipped to handle whatever missions you may face in the future.

Strength Through Truth