



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
U.S. ARMY PUBLIC AFFAIRS SCHOOL
4550 PARADE FIELD LANE, SUITE 5650
FORT GEORGE G. MEADE, MD 20755-5650

SAPA-PAC

21 January 2026

MEMORANDUM FOR Student, Public Affairs & Communication Strategy Qualification Course, Fort George G. Meade, MD 20755-5620

SUBJECT: Public Affairs & Communication Strategy Qualification (PACS-Q) Course Guidance

1. Reference: Military Training Specific Allotment Handbook, May 2014 and The Joint Travel Regulations (JTR), 1 January 2026.
2. Congratulations and welcome to the PACS-Q course. All training will be conducted at the Defense Information School (DINFOS), 6500 Mapes Road, Fort George G. Meade, Maryland
3. Student Accountability. The U.S. Army Public Affairs School, Student Company is responsible for all PACS-Q students. Professional conduct, commensurate with the standards expected of Army Officers and Noncommissioned Officers, is required at all times.
4. In-Processing.
 - a. Lodging: Upon arrival, check in to the Candlewood Suites, 4690 Cooper Avenue, Fort George G. Meade, Maryland. Contact usarpacsqdocumentinboxatapac@army.mil or the Student Company Staff Duty at (301)-677-6167 if you anticipate arrival issues.
 - b. First Day Reporting: Report to the DINFOS main entrance between 0730 and 0745 on the first day of class. Instructors will direct you to the appropriate classroom. Bring a printed copy of your orders and profile (if applicable). Student Company personnel will conduct an orientation brief.
 - c. Medical Appointments: Do not schedule sick call or other appointments on the first day of class. Failure to report on time may result in loss of training status.
 - d. Reserve/National Guard: U.S. Army Reserve and National Guard Soldiers must submit a copy of their PACS-Q orders and a signed DA Form 5960 to usarpacsqdocumentinboxatapac@army.mil no later than 14 days prior to the course start date.
5. Funding and Logistics. PACS-Q is a Military Training Specific Allotment (MTSA) funded course. Local Soldiers within National Capital Region, adhere to The Joint Travel Regulations (JTR) located on <https://www.travel.dod.mil/>.

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- a. Lodging: Lodging at the Candlewood Suites is mandatory and provided at no cost.
 - b. Per Diem: Students on TDY receive partial Per Diem for meals at the Freedom Inn Dining Facility (8502 Simonds St.). Breakfast is provided at the Candlewood Suites. Adhere to order stipulations regarding meals and lodging.
 - c. Travel Authorization: Travel is authorized only with a reserved status in the Army Training Requirements and Resource System (ATRRS). Travel is not authorized for Soldiers in a waitlist status. Confirm room reservations 30 days prior to arrival at IHG Candlewood Suites, (410) 674-7700.
 - d. Dining Facility Hours:
 - (1) Weekdays: 0700-0900 (Breakfast), 1130-1300 (Lunch), 1700-1830 (Dinner)
 - (2) Weekends: 0900-1300 (Brunch), 1700-1830 (Dinner)
6. Transportation. Rental cars are not essential due to the proximity of lodging to DINFOS (approximately 0.7 miles, 14-minute walk). Privately Owned Vehicles (POVs) are authorized for CONUS-based Soldiers.
7. Required Clothing.
- a. Army Combat Uniform (ACU) in Operational Camouflage Pattern (OCP) – 2 sets.
 - b. Army Physical Fitness Uniform (APFU) – black with gold lettering.
 - c. Cold Weather Gear (October – April): Black fleece cap, gloves, APFU pants, APFU jacket.
8. Uniforms for Events.
- a. Graduation (Winter): Full dress uniform.
 - b. Graduation (Summer) / Last Friday of Each Month: Class B uniform with ribbons.
 - c. General: Appropriate business casual civilian attire.
9. Physical Fitness.

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a. Army Fitness Test (AFT) Requirement: All students must pass a record AFT to graduate and receive a DA Form 1059. The AFT will be conducted within the first 10 training days. One retest opportunity will be provided. Failure to pass the retest will result in dismissal and a referred DA 1059.

b. APFU: Wear seasonally appropriate APFU for the AFT and summer APFU for weigh-in.

c. Profiles: Soldiers with permanent profiles will complete all AFT events not prohibited by the profile. DA Form 3349 is required for approved alternate aerobic events. Temporary profiles must expire before PACS-Q attendance.

d. Pregnancy: Soldiers who are pregnant or within 365 days post-pregnancy are exempt from AFT requirements. A DA 1059 will annotate "Did not take AFT IAW AD 2022-06".

e. Body Fat Assessment: Soldiers scoring 465 or higher on the AFT (minimum 80 points per event) are exempt from body fat assessment.

f. Compliance: All students must meet height and weight standards as outlined in AR 350-1 and AR 600-9.

g. Army Body Composition Assessment: Conducted within the first 10 training days. One retest opportunity is provided. Reassessment failure will result in dismissal and a referred DA 1059.

10. Healthcare: Kimbrough Ambulatory Care Center (KACC) has no emergency room (ER) and may have limited capabilities. Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, Andrews Air Force Base hospitals and urgent care facilities are nearby. Contact KACC and your TRICARE representative prior to arrival. Ensure adequate prescription medications are brought with you. Students must move their TRICARE to TRICARE East upon arrival to Fort Meade to ensure they're medically covered during the course.

11. Leave and Pass. Coordinate all leave and pass requests through your home station and with the U.S. Army Public Affairs School, Student Company for accountability purposes.

12. Travel Pay. Ensure your Defense Travel System (DTS) orders are properly configured and pay is arranged through your home unit prior to arrival.

13. Operational Security Course. A three-day Operational Security Course (Level II) may be offered post-PACS-Q. Reserve and National Guard Soldiers must provide

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separate orders and funding. Contact dma.meade.dinfos.list.registrar@mail.mil, (301) 677-4343, for confirmation.

14. The POC for this action is LTC Judith (Judy) Marlowe at (301) 677-7272 or PublicAffairsOfficerInformation@army.mil.

Stacy M. Hopwood
COL, AG
Commandant