

6405. EARLY RELEASE TO FURTHER EDUCATION

1. General. GCMCA's may authorize particularly deserving enlisted Marines to be released from active duty before expiration of active service for the purpose of pursuing their education via college or a vocational/technical school. A vocational school is to include any state or local police department, fire department, or state, city, or county service agency that would require the Marine to attend a full-time course of instruction lasting 3 months or more. The educational institution must be accredited as specified in par 6405.3. Marines who request early release for education will be considered for promotion. **This program is applicable to all enlisted personnel except:**

a. Six-month trainees.

*b. Reservists ordered to active duty due to unsatisfactory participation as provided in reference @ Title 10 U.S.C. 1230. However, all other Reservists who are "set back" in training at a recruit depot and cannot meet the last date for entrance to college may be separated per reference (bg) MCO 1001R.1L W/CH 1.

c. Aliens seeking to qualify for citizenship by completing 3 years of active duty unless they are to be transferred to inactive duty in a Reserve component.

d. Marines who acquired additional obligated service due to advanced training.

2. Criteria. The following criteria applies:

a. The Marine must be eligible for an honorable discharge;

b. The Marine's services must not be essential to the command's mission;

c. The latest acceptable registration and class convening dates of the school term for which the Marine seeks release must fall within the last 3 months of the Marine's remaining service.

d. Applications will normally be denied if the Marine has:

(1) Received fully funded education, or education for which the Marine incurred obligated service;

(2) Completed advanced technical training;

(3) Received special compensation during the current enlistment (e.g., reenlistment bonus);

(4) A military occupational specialty which requires retention; or

(5) Become indebted to the Government as a result of unearned leave (advance and excess leave), advance pay, reduction in grade, and fines and forfeitures.

e. Waiver of the criteria in the preceding paragraph will only be considered when the Marine makes a cash remittance before initiation of separation processing.

3. Application. An application format is provided in figure 6-5.

a. In their applications, all Marines must:

(1) Clearly establish why the specific school term for which release is sought is academically the most opportune time to begin or resume education and why delay of enrollment until normal expiration of service would cause undue hardship;

(2) State in the application, "I understand I am subject to possible recall to active duty and/or prosecution for fraudulent separation if I do not attend the school for which I am granted early release." and

(3) Provide evidence that full tuition for the first school term has been paid or will be paid.

b. In addition to the requirements in paragraph 6405.3a, Marines applying for separation to attend college must present documentary evidence which establishes:

(1) That the Marine has been accepted without qualification to a recognized institution of higher learning.

(2) The school is accredited in the Education Directory for Postsecondary Education published yearly by the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare or has been determined by the United States Office of Education to be eligible for such listing.

(3) That the Marine will be in a full-time course of instruction leading to an associate, baccalaureate, or higher degree; and

(4) The latest date of registration and the class starting date for the specified school term and the next succeeding term.

c. In addition to the requirements in paragraph 6405.3a, Marines applying for separation to attend a vocational/technical school must present documentary evidence which establishes:

(1) The school's specific accreditation status, the date such status was acquired, and the name of the accrediting agency or association. A recognized school is one which is approved by a State Board of Vocational Education or is accredited by a nationally recognized accreditation agency or association listed by the U.S. Commissioner of Education.

(2) That the Marine has been accepted without qualification to a fulltime course of instruction lasting 3 months or more; and

(3) The latest date of registration and the class starting date for the specified school term and the next succeeding term.

d. The term "acceptance without qualification" means that the Marine must be accepted for admission without being subject to any further approval before entrance. A statement that the Marine is admissible, subject to a review of the Marine's records, or subject to passing an entrance exam, qualifies the acceptance and prohibits the Marine's early release. A Marine who is accepted on probation meets the requirements for early release.

e. The term "full-time resident course of instruction" means the Marine must take the minimum number of credit hours for the semester, quarter, or the term considered by the school to be full-time (excluding night school).

4. Commander's Action. Marines who meet the criteria above and who have obtained the required substantiating documentation may submit an application via the chain of command to the GCMCA.

a. The Marine's immediate commanding officer will ensure that all the criteria have been clearly met, that the information contained in the request is accurate, and by endorsement will provide:

- (1) A definite recommendation for approval or disapproval;
- (2) The applicant's normal EAS, PEBD, and current leave balance;
- (3) Certification that the Marine is eligible for an honorable discharge;
- (4) Certification that the Marine is not requesting early separation to avoid service; and

- (5) Any other information deemed appropriate.
- b. The effective date of separation must be within 3 months of the Marine's normal release date (i.e., EAS, EOS, and extension). It is not the "advanced" separation date established by any other early separation program which might be in effect.
 - c. Applications should be submitted to the GCMCA at least 4 weeks before the requested date of separation. Marines assigned to OCONUS commands should apply 6 weeks before the requested date of separation.
 - d. The approved separation date will usually be 10 calendar days before the class starting date. In no event will it exceed 30 days.
 - *e. Commanders may grant leave while awaiting separation in conjunction with this program as authorized by reference (bm) MCO 1050.3J; however, it may not be used in combination with the 90-day maximum period to meet a class convening date not falling in the basic criteria. In no event will an effective date of release from active duty be authorized for a date earlier than 90 days in advance of the normal expiration of active service.

5. Exceptions and Waivers

- a. The requirement for an applicant to be eligible for an honorable separation and the maximum permissible early release of 90 days will not be waived.
- b. Leave must not be authorized to exceed this 90-day limit.
- c. Address any other exceptions to the CMC (MMSR-3) for a final determination.
- d. Cases that fail to meet the above requirements may, in exceptional circumstances, be submitted to the Secretary of the Navy under Secretarial Plenary Authority/Best Interest of the Service (paragraph 6421) via the CMC (MMSR-3). These cases should be coordinated with the CMC (MMSR-3) before submission. This authority will be reserved exclusively for superior Marines faced with a "once in a lifetime" opportunity.