



# Department of Defense **INSTRUCTION**

**NUMBER** 1215.21

October 10, 2014

Incorporating Change 1, Effective May 12, 2020

---

---

USD(P&R)

**SUBJECT:** Reserve Component (RC) Use of Electronic-based Distributed Learning Methods for Training

**References:** See Enclosure 1

1. PURPOSE. This instruction:

a. Establishes policy, assigns responsibilities, and provides procedures for members of the Selected Reserve to use electronic-based distributed learning (DL) methods to conduct training away from scheduled unit training assemblies or apart from other collective training time in accordance with the authority in DoD Directive 5124.02 (Reference (a)). DoD Instruction 1322.26 (Reference (b)) outlines the policy for DL.

b. Supports RC readiness by providing the Military Services greater flexibility within existing statutes and policies to leverage technology and available resources for training.

c. Cancels previous guidance issued by Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD(P&R)) Memorandum (Reference (c)).

2. APPLICABILITY. This instruction applies to OSD, the Military Departments (including the Coast Guard at all times, including when it is a Service in the Department of Homeland Security by agreement with that Department), the Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Joint Staff, the Combatant Commands, the Office of the Inspector General of the Department of Defense, the Defense Agencies, the DoD Field Activities, and all other organizational entities within the DoD (referred to collectively in this instruction as the "DoD Components").

3. POLICY. It is DoD policy that:

a. The Secretary of the Military Department concerned may direct members of the Selected Reserve to accomplish training requirements related to unit readiness or mobilization.

b. To increase available unit training assembly time for hands-on individual military occupational skill (MOS), military occupational code (MOC), and collective training opportunities for members of the RC, the Military Departments are directed to use DL methods to conduct individual training as applicable.

c. Electronic-based DL methodologies should be applied to the maximum extent possible to accomplish common military training requirements, subject to the limitations in section 206 of Title 37, United States Code (Reference (d)).


4. RESPONSIBILITIES. See Enclosure 2.

5. PROCEDURES. See Enclosure 3.

6. RELEASABILITY. **Cleared for public release.** This instruction is available on the Directives Division Website at <https://www.esd.whs.mil/DD/>.

7. SUMMARY OF CHANGE 1. The change to this issuance updates references and organizational titles and removes expiration language in accordance with current Chief Management Officer of the Department of Defense direction.

8. EFFECTIVE DATE. This instruction is effective October 10, 2014.



Jessica L. Wright  
Under Secretary of Defense for  
Personnel and Readiness

Enclosures

1. References
2. Responsibilities
3. Procedures

Glossary

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ENCLOSURE 1: REFERENCES.....4

ENCLOSURE 2: RESPONSIBILITIES.....5

    ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR MANPOWER AND RESERVE AFFAIRS  
    (ASD(M&RA)).....5

    DIRECTOR, DEFENSE FINANCE AND ACCOUNTING SERVICE (DFAS).....5

    SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS AND THE COMMANDANT  
    OF THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD (USCG) .....5

ENCLOSURE 3: PROCEDURES.....6

    QUALIFYING DL TRAINING COURSES OF INSTRUCTION  
    FOR COMPENSATION .....6

    DIRECTING THE DL TRAINING COURSE OF INSTRUCTION.....6

    COMPENSATION .....7

    LIMITATIONS.....7

GLOSSARY .....8

    PART I: ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS .....8

    PART II: DEFINITIONS.....8

ENCLOSURE 1

REFERENCES

- (a) DoD Directive 5124.02, “Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD(P&R)),” June 23, 2008
- (b) DoD Instruction 1322.26, “Distributed Learning (DL),” October 5, 2017
- (c) Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness Memorandum, “Policy on Reserve Component (RC) Electronic-Based Distributed Learning (DL) Compensation,” June 29, 2008 (hereby cancelled)
- (d) Title 37, United States Code
- (e) DoD 7000.14-R, Volume 7A, “Financial Management Regulation: Military Pay Policy and Procedures – Active Duty and Reserve Pay,” current edition
- (f) DoD Instruction 1215.07, “Service Credit for Non-Regular Retirement,” July 30, 2019
- (g) Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, “DoD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms,” current edition

ENCLOSURE 2

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR MANPOWER AND RESERVE AFFAIRS (ASD(M&RA)). Under the authority, direction, and control of the USD(P&R), the ASD(M&RA):

- a. Oversees implementation of RC DL training methods across the seven Reserve Components as part of the Total Force.
- b. Assesses the compliance of Service policies, plans, and procedures on an annual basis, as they pertain to RC DL training methods to ensure operational and strategic RCs that are seamlessly integrated with the Total Force supporting national security at home and abroad.
- c. Develops additional procedures related to RC DL methods as required to support the seven Reserve Components as part of the Total Force.

2. DIRECTOR, DEFENSE FINANCE AND ACCOUNTING SERVICE (DFAS). Under the authority, direction, and control of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller)/Chief Financial Officer, Department of Defense, the Director, DFAS, develops regulations in Volume 7A of DoD 7000.14-R (Reference (e)) regarding procedures for payment in accordance with section 206(d)(2) of Reference (d) and this instruction.

3. SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS AND COMMANDANT OF THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD (USCG). The Secretaries of the Military Departments and Commandant of the USCG:

- a. Develop the policies, plans, and procedures necessary to ensure successful and accountable implementation of this instruction within their respective Component.
- b. Create, communicate, and annually update a list of DL training courses related to unit readiness or mobilization that are eligible for compensation under this instruction.
- c. Determine, communicate, and annually update, for each DL training course eligible for compensation under this instruction, as well as reasonable time for successful course completion.
- d. Develop procedures to determine successful completion of DL training courses.
- e. Ensure that plans and policies for the compensation of DL training courses for RC Service members are consistent with References (a), (b), (d), (e), DoD Instruction 1215.07 (Reference (f)), and this instruction.

ENCLOSURE 3

PROCEDURES

1. QUALIFYING DL TRAINING COURSES OF INSTRUCTION FOR COMPENSATION

a. To be considered for compensation, the proposed qualifying DL training courses must:

(1) Be delivered via DL methodologies.

(2) Support required training related to unit readiness or mobilization, as directed by the Military Secretary concerned.

b. Training requirements related to unit readiness or mobilization, as directed by the Secretary concerned, may include courses supporting completion of specific occupational skill qualification (e.g., MOS or MOC, Air Force specialty code, Navy enlisted code), expeditionary, or combat skills training, and annual ancillary/general military training (AT/GMT).

2. DIRECTING THE DL TRAINING COURSE OF INSTRUCTION

a. Consider these factors when directing RC Service members to train via DL methodologies:

(1) Annual unit training requirements relative to scheduled unit training time.

(2) The amount of recurring required training that can be conducted individually by Service members via DL methodologies.

(3) Funds available for DL compensation.

b. Should annual unit readiness and mobilization training requirements exceed actual scheduled training time and relevant courses of instruction are available via DL methods, then DL methods are recommended as long as unit training funds are available for compensation.

(1) Service members will be notified of the requirement to complete a course of instruction via DL methodologies. The notification should include:

(a) The name of the training course.

(b) The date by which the training course must be complete.

(c) The time to successful completion credited for compensation purposes.

(d) Documentation requirements to validate or confirm successful completion of the training course.

(2) The Secretary of the Military Department concerned or the Commandant of the USCG should facilitate access where possible to ancillary equipment or material required to complete courses of instruction and make available to Service members that are notified of DL course requirements (e.g., Common Access Card reader, computer, or Internet).

(3) RC Service members directed to train using DL methodologies on courses related to unit readiness or mobilization will be compensated.

c. Availability of DL training courses of instruction does not preclude a commander's discretion to use other delivery methods (e.g., face-to-face, resident training) for courses of instruction if circumstances warrant.

### 3. COMPENSATION

a. Upon verification of successful completion, total the pre-determined time to successful completion for each course of instruction to determine the total time.

b. Pursuant to Reference (d), the rate of compensation will be at the rate of 1/30 of the basic pay authorized for a member of a corresponding grade entitled to basic pay for each period at which the member is engaged for at least 4 hours.

c. Award service credit in accordance with Reference (f).

d. Multiple courses of instruction, successfully completed, may be aggregated to achieve the minimum 4 hours required for compensation.

4. LIMITATIONS. The limitations of the number of retirement points that may be credited for a reserve retirement in an anniversary year are outlined in Reference (f).

GLOSSARY

PART I. ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ASD(M&RA)	Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs
ATP	additional training period
AT/GMP	ancillary/general military training
DFAS	Defense Finance and Accounting Service
DL	distributed learning
IDT	inactive duty training
MOC	Military Occupational Code
MOS	Military Occupational Specialty
RC	Reserve Component
USCG	United States Coast Guard
USD(P&R)	Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness

PART II. DEFINITIONS

Unless otherwise noted, these terms and their definitions are for the purposes of this instruction.

ATP. A category of IDT outlined in Reference (a). ATPs for units, components of units, and individuals are for accomplishing additional required training, as defined by post-mobilization mission requirements.

AT/GMT. Periodic, non-occupational directed training that provides common knowledge and skills required for all Military Service members. AT/GMT enhances an individual's ability to be prepared to perform military duties or activities.

compensation (regular compensation or regular military compensation). Defined in section 101(25) of Reference (d).

DL. Defined in Reference (b).

IDT. Defined in the DoD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms (Reference (g)).



required training. Training related to unit readiness or mobilization, as directed by the Secretary concerned in accordance with Reference (d).

successful completion. Achieving established or prescribed learning objectives (standards) upon conclusion of a course of instruction. To ensure achievement of the learning objectives, the course may utilize various evaluation methods.

time to successful completion. Time required to achieve successful completion of a DL course of instruction as determined by the Secretaries of the Military Departments and Commandant of the USCG for the purposes of compensation.