The Military Member & Advanced Education

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Overview

Do I need an advanced degree?

When should I start?

Degree types.

What degree should I pursue?
Do I Need an Advanced Degree?

An advanced degree is a main reason people join the military
- Can you succeed without one – yes - but the odds are not in your favor

The simple answer is **YES, you need it**
- Required for supervisor endorsements and promotions
- Required for many civilian jobs & if not is often a hiring tie-breaker
- Helps you get the job you want
- Helps you keep your job during cut-backs
- Helps you advance in your career field
- Helps enhance your standard of living
Purpose of an Advanced Degree

Provides foundational knowledge in your career field

Provides general background for dealing with people

Helps you understand how to:

• Analyze situations
• Find needed information
• Communicate effectively
• Collaborate in a team environment

You generally will be a better citizen

Supervisors & employers look for these things
When Should I Start?

If you haven’t started or completed an advanced degree – **START NOW**

Once you’ve started, continue until you’ve finished a master’s

A demanding career has many study deterrents

- Deployments, relocations, high ops tempo, family, etc.
- Most members take 5-10 years to complete a degree
- Members have $4500 annual TA funding – average use is $1600 (unused portion is not recoverable)

9-11 GI Bill benefits are transferrable to dependents – greater use of TA allows more GI Bill transfer opportunity
Degrees Types

Associates
- Normally 60 credit hours/semester hours
- A good place to start if little work beyond high school
- Shows motivation & serious attitude about a career
- Generally allows advancement right into bachelor’s

Bachelor’s
- Normally 120 credit hours/semester hours
- Should be your minimum objective
- Prepares you for entry/mid-level careers
Degrees Types

Master’s

• Normally 36 credit hours/semester hours
• A worthy educational goal
• Prepares you for higher level positions & a broader scope of management level positions

Other – Ph.D. & professional education
What Degree Program?

Some prime considerations:
• What is your passion?
• Mid-long term goals
• What is the job potential for your degree choice?
• Where are you in your career?

Caution – fast and/or easy is often not the best choice
Other Factors

Many military wait too late to get started
Find a friend or co-worker to share the journey
  • It helps motivate you
  • You can help each other with difficult subject matter
Get a support network – especially family
When you start, make sure you let the school know as soon as difficulties arise
Deployments & remotes are often the best time to get the most done
Don’t try to take on too many courses at once
Good planning & steady course completion are key
Webinar Take-Aways

Understand why you need advanced education
If you haven’t started – **Start NOW**
Have a good plan & support network
Look for a flexible program with great support
Choose your path wisely & keep a steady pace
**Don’t dwell on the challenges – focus on the opportunities**
References

The Earning Power of College Degrees and Majors

The (Non-Monetary) Value of a College Degree
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