1. **Purpose.** To assign responsibility for Navy and Marine Corps Voluntary Education (VOLED) programs, per references (a) and (b). This instruction has been administratively revised and should be reviewed in its entirety. VOLED enables Sailors and Marines to further their education by completing a high school diploma or its equivalent, upgrading basic academic skills, and achieving a technical certificate or college degree.

2. **Cancellation.** SECNAVINST 1560.4A.

3. **Definitions.** Special terms used in this instruction are defined in enclosure (1).

4. **Applicability.** This instruction applies to the Office of the Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV), the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO), the Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC), and all U.S. Navy and U.S. Marine Corps installations, commands, activities, field offices, and all other organizational entities within the Department of the Navy (DON).

5. **Policy.** By helping Sailors and Marines continue their education, the DON will enhance the career potential and personal growth of members, support recruitment, retention and readiness of quality personnel, strengthen job performance, and promote a culture of continuous learning. In support of these purposes:
a. Navy and Marine Corps shall support Sailors and Marines in their voluntary pursuit of advanced education goals by ensuring members have access to educational services and Tuition Assistance (TA), regardless of mission or duty assignment. Wherever appropriate, distance-learning technologies may be used to support this policy. While it is important for the Navy and Marine Corps to encourage members to enhance career potential and personal growth by providing them with voluntary education opportunities, commands shall have approval authority for individual member TA requests. A request shall be disapproved if a member does not meet established Department of Defense (DoD) or DON eligibility criteria.

b. Navy and Marine Corps shall provide TA to educational institutions (schools) consistent with reference (b).

c. Navy and Marine Corps shall ensure that guidance, educational counseling, and testing services are provided by qualified personnel and that staffing, local or remote, is adequate to support the number of military personnel served.

d. Navy and Marine Corps shall ensure members are given an opportunity to upgrade their academic skills regardless of mission or duty assignment. Navy and Marine Corps Service Members are eligible for the VOLED programs. Adult family members are eligible to participate in academic skills programs on a space available basis at no-cost to the government. Additionally, on a space available, self-funded basis, active duty members of other U.S. Armed Services who are co-located with Navy or Marine Corps commands, members of the Navy and Marine Corps Inactive Reserve, retired members and their adult family members, and civilian employees of the DoD may take advantage of educational opportunities provided under the VOLED program.

e. Navy and Marine Corps shall encourage members to obtain Service Members Opportunity Colleges Degree Network System or Service Members Opportunity Colleges Career and Technical Education student agreements in order to achieve college degrees.

f. Members participating in VOLED programs are expected to use off-duty time to complete degree programs. Sailors and Marines may participate in academic skills programs during duty
hours. Commanding officers may also permit use of normal duty hours for pursuit of VOLED as appropriate, when it is deemed to be relevant to the Navy or Marine Corps.

g. Navy and Marine Corps shall provide on-base programs in response to local needs assessments or unique Service requirements.

6. Responsibilities

a. The Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Manpower and Reserve Affairs) (ASN (M&RA)) shall be the responsible Secretariat office for:

(1) Developing DON policy for VOLED programs; and

(2) Monitoring compliance with DON and DoD guidance on VOLED programs.

b. The CNO and the CMC shall:

(1) Exercise their delegated authority to execute the responsibilities assigned to SECNAV in references (a) and (b) for their respective Services, with the exception of Executive Agent for Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES). Responsibilities for DANTES have been returned to the Office of, Secretary of Defense;

(2) Ensure that sufficient fiscal, facilities, and staffing support is provided to carry out requirements of this instruction, including, but not limited to, education centers (local or virtual), trained staff to provide educational counseling, adequate facilities, and funding for TA and academic skills programs;

(3) Ensure that VOLED policy and procedural guidance is issued consistent with references (a) and (b);

(4) Ensure installation commanding officers, ship commanding officers, unit commanders, and DON leadership are well informed about VOLED opportunities;
(5) Ensure facilitation of operations of accredited institutions providing degree programs on military installations wherever possible;

(6) Request studies periodically to document the impact of VOLED programs on personnel and commands;

(7) Maintain liaison with federal, state, and national organizations in support of military VOLED;

(8) Provide necessary support for the DoD-established, third-party academic institution review process;

(9) Identify and provide one representative to serve on the Interservice Voluntary Education Board, per reference (b), responsible for their Services’ voluntary education policies. Each Service representative’s membership is expected to be on a permanent basis and may be changed only when his or her other VOLED policy position is changed, or whenever deemed necessary by the Service Chief;

(10) Assign, on a rotating basis, a senior enlisted member in the military paygrade E-9 to serve as the DANTES Enlisted Advisor;

(11) Assign, on a rotating basis, an officer in a military paygrade no lower than O-4 to serve as the DANTES Reserve Component Advisor;

(12) Provide military members with a Joint Services Transcript (JST). At a minimum, the JST will include documented military student data, courses, and military occupations, including descriptions, learning outcomes, and equivalent college credit recommendations as well as national college-level exam results;

(13) Provide annual reports to ASN (M&RA) on the status of VOLED programs, to include usage (statistics), costs, and any significant Service-level policy changes which may attract Congressional interest or infrastructure changes impacting the program; and

(14) As authorized by reference (c), ensure Service Members receiving TA complete a written agreement acknowledging the conditions and requirements of receiving TA, to include any Service obligations required by reference (d).
c. In accordance with reference (e), the establishment and use of internal controls and accounting procedures are mandated to ensure: effectiveness and efficiency of operations, reliability of financial reporting, and compliance with applicable laws and regulations. Additionally, as part of the annual Manager’s Internal Control Program report, the naval Services will provide the ASN (M&RA) with copies of the sections of their reports that are relevant to the VOLED programs. The reports will include summary descriptions of internal controls used, their sufficiency, and any identified weaknesses or deficiencies.

7. Records Management

a. Records created as a result of this instruction, regardless of format or media, must be maintained and dispositioned according to the records disposition schedules found on the Directives and Records Management Division (DRMD) portal page: https://portal.secnav.navy.mil/orgs/DUSNM/DONAA/DRM/SitePages/Home.aspx.

b. For questions concerning the management of records related to this instruction or the records disposition schedules, please contact your local Records Manager or the DRMD program office.

8. Reports. The reporting requirement for subject matters included in paragraphs 6b(13) and 6c are exempt from reports control per SECNAV M-5214.1, PART IV paragraph 7q.

THOMAS B. MODLY
Under Secretary of the Navy

Distribution:
Electronic only, via Department of the Navy Issuance website: http://donidocumentservices.dla.mil.
DEFINITIONS

For purposes of this instruction, the following definitions apply:

1. **Academic Skills.** Competencies in English, reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, and computer skills that are essential to successful job performance and new learning. Also referred to as functional or basic skills.

2. **Adult Family Member.** A family member, over the age of 18, of an Active Duty, Reserve, or National Guard member, or of a DoD civilian with a valid DoD identification card.

3. **Distance Education.** The delivery of education through electronically mediated means, including satellite, video teleconferencing, stand-alone computer-based, the Internet, and any other means in which an instructor is not physically present. This definition includes correspondence and independent study courses.

4. **Education Center.** The VOLED office on a Navy or Marine Corps installation or at a centralized location accessible via various technology modalities that is staffed with professionally qualified personnel to conduct VOLED programs. May include office space, classrooms, laboratories, and other features.

5. **Education Staff.** The civilian and contract personnel who staff the Navy and Marine Corps education offices.

6. **Off-Duty Time.** Time not scheduled to perform official duties.

7. **Service Members Opportunity Colleges (SOC).** A network of accredited colleges that offer degree and/or technical certificate programs in a variety of fields. The member colleges incorporate college credit for military training and experience into their degree plans, automatically accept transfer credit from other SOC colleges, and require minimum residency to complete a degree.
8. **TA.** Funds provided by the Navy and Marine Corps to pay part of the cost of tuition/fees for courses taken during off-duty time.

9. **VOLED.** Worldwide continuing education programs in which Sailors and Marines elect to participate during their off-duty time. The primary purpose is to earn a college degree. VOLED programs also encompass academic skills education.