



THE NCO LEADERSHIP  
CENTER OF EXCELLENCE  

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 & U.S. ARMY SERGEANTS MAJOR ACADEMY

Developing the Future of the NCO Corps through Education:  
**NCO Common Core Competencies**  
(NCO C3)



**NONCOMMISSIONED OFFICER LEADERSHIP CENTER OF EXCELLENCE  
NCO COMMON CORE COMPETENCIES (NCO C3)  
(Effective Until Rescinded or Superseded)**

**1. PURPOSE.** Bulletin 1-19 establishes structure and relationship of the competencies in NCO PME Common Core. These NCO Common Core Competencies (NCO C3), formerly known as Leader Core Competencies (LCC), are the thread that links curriculum sequentially and progressively throughout the NCO learning continuum. Additionally, this bulletin aims to condense, align, and define NCO leader development doctrine and guidelines regarding NCO C3 and its impacts on the institutional domain, specifically within Professional Military Education (PME) as a relevant quick reference guide. Further, this bulletin seeks to replace the 4x6 NCO Core Competencies. Ultimately, this bulletin provides a deliberate yet foundational approach towards guiding Soldiers and NCOs on NCO C3 expectations within respective PME levels, throughout their careers.

**2. APPLICABILITY.** Competencies and attributes are applied as teaching and learning topics critical to the development of the NCO Professional Military Education (PME) course framework.

**3. REFERENCES.**

- a. Army Regulation 350-1, Army Training and Leader Development, 10 December 2017
- b. United States Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) NCO 2020 Strategy, 4 December 2015
- c. United States Army TRADOC Regulation 350-70, Army Training and Education Development, 10 July 17.
- d. United States Army TRADOC, Organization, Training, Materiel, Leadership, Personnel, and Facilities (DOTMLPF) Accreditation Standards 10 July 2017.
- e. The United States Army University Strategy, 8 September 2014.
- f. The United States Army Learning Concept for 2015, 14 September 2010
- g. The U.S. Army Learning Concept for Training and Education, 2020-2040, April 2017
- h. The Army Human Dimension Strategy 2015
- i. The Army Leader Development Strategy 2013
- j. TRADOC PAM 525-3-1, The United States Army Operating Concept (AOC) 2016-2028, 7 October 2014
- k. FM 6-22, Leader Development, June 2015

#### 4. INTRODUCTION.

a. NCO professional military education (PME) has undergone revolutionary change and growth from a task-oriented approach towards applying and expanding educational concepts and principles. This evolution saw the emergence of competencies and attributes that focus on “Soft Skills” while complementing technical skills. In addition, the publishing of the Army Learning Concept 2015 set forth requirements to move from a Pedagogy (Child-like) learning model to an Andragogy (adult) learning model for all Soldiers.

b. The NCOLCoE, as the TRADOC’s and Combined Arms Center’s (CAC) lead agent for NCO PME cohort, provides the relationship among learning outcomes and terminal learning objectives as determined through topic, gap, and needs analysis. The outcomes of these analysis resulted in topics and subject areas for the NCO Common Core Competencies (NCO C3). The NCO C3 provides a clear and logical framework for all non-MOS specific NCO PME and delineates between the meaning of the Leader Requirements Model, 21st Century Soldier Competencies, and directed/mandatory training as previously outlined in AR 350-1.

#### 5. TERMS.

- a. Noncommissioned Officer Common Core Competencies (NCO C3).
- b. Core Leader Competencies (FM 6-22).
- c. 21<sup>st</sup> Century Soldier Competencies.
- d. Directed/Mandatory Training.

#### 6. RESPONSIBILITIES.

- a. Commandant, NCOLCoE, directs the implementation of NCO C3 in non-MOS specific NCO PME.
- b. The Director of Curriculum Development, provides subject matter expertise in determining relevance, feasibility, practicality, and implementation guidance for NCO C3 into NCO PME.

**7. PROPONENT.** Submit questions, comments or recommended changes to this bulletin to the Director, Policy and Governance, NCOLCoE and USASMA, Room A4, 11291 SGT E. Churchill Street, Fort Bliss, TX 79918 (915) 744-6098.



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**Overview.** Planning for the development of an NCO education system began in 1969 with the official establishment of the NCOES occurring in late 1971. This fledgling start would become the most comprehensive NCO education system ever seen in a military force, anywhere in the world. NCOES experienced broad change to include the inception of the Sergeants Major Academy in 1972 and PLC, BNCOC and ANCOC in the mid-1970s, and the emergence of the Enlisted Personnel Management System in 1975. NCOES underwent extensive studies, improvements, and revisions from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s. As Chief of Staff of the Army, General James C. McConville stated, “The Army must modernize with new doctrine.....”. As we experienced 14 years of sustained combat operations, the Army sought ways to leverage lessons learned to continue to improve ways to educate and train Noncommissioned Officers of the future. In December 2015, the Army Training and Doctrine Command released the NCO 2020 Strategy. This strategy outlined three main lines of effort: Development, Talent Management, and Stewardship of the Profession. Leader development is fundamental to the readiness of our Army and these three lines of effort provided the ends, ways, and means through 39 imperatives to enhance Army readiness. The strategy further outlined the evolution and expansion of the NCOES to the NCO Professional Development System (NCOPDS), which serves as the vehicle to operationalize the concepts and lines of effort in the strategy. NCO leader development is a deliberate, continuous, progressive, and relevant process. The strategy supports imperatives related to the Army profession, Mission Command Doctrine, human performance, and overall combat readiness of the force. It incorporates principles and concepts of the Army Learning Strategy (ALS), the Army Leader Development Strategy (ALDS), the Army Operating Concept (AOC), the Army Human Dimension Strategy (AHDS), and Mission Command (MC). These strategies and concepts drove revolutionary change to NCO leader development. This approach led to the development of six leader core competencies and related framework guiding the change to NCO PME and NCO leader development. These competencies, integrated into all levels of NCOPDS, have equipped noncommissioned officers with the skills and attributes to be critical thinkers, problem solvers, adaptive, innovative, creative, and lethal leaders capable of meeting the challenges faced in a complex and chaotic environment. Learning and leadership are at the core of the Army profession.

*“The Army must modernize with new doctrine, a force redesigned, and the capabilities we need for multi-domain operations.”*

-General James C. McConville  
40<sup>th</sup> Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army  
9 August, 2019

**Competencies Defined.** Learning is the acquisition of new knowledge or skill by experience, instruction, or study, or a combination of all three. In the Army, learning is continuous. The learning process involves internalizing and synthesizing information and knowledge and manifesting behaviors as competencies. Competencies are categorized as either technical or non-technical. Technical competencies are associated with a specific military occupational specialty (MOS) or function to perform the job or task required successfully. Non-technical competencies demonstrate the “soft skills” (leadership, ability to relate to others, etc.) or personal attributes.

In order to improve individual development, the institutional domain identifies, assesses, and records individual learned competencies. All content within a learning outcomes-based environment should be associated with one or more competency or their subordinate parts, through the Army Learning Areas and/or General Learning Outcomes (ALA/GLO). The ALA/GLO framework ensures linkage between individual and collective competencies across all cohorts (officers, warrant officers, noncommissioned officers, and civilians). ALAs and GLOs are further linked to each cohort PME lesson outlining the requisite level of learning (Bloom’s Taxonomy).

**Development of Leader Core Competencies.** The objective of the NCO Strategy, Line of Effort #1 “Development” was for noncommissioned officers to develop as leaders over time, through deliberate progressive and sequential processes incorporating training, education, and experience across the three learning domains (operational, institutional, and self-development) throughout the Soldier lifecycle.

After being engaged in the global war on terrorism (GWOT), for more than 14 years, senior Army leaders identified significant gaps in NCO education. This was also clearly evident in the PME void occurring between the Senior Leader Courses (SLC) and attendance at the Sergeants Major Course (SMC). An average of 7 years between SLC and SMC created atrophy in the art and science of leading and training for senior NCOs. During GWOT, NCO common core for skill levels 1 through 4 were moved in to Structured Self-Development (SSD) as online training, and no common core for skill levels 5 or 6 existed. In order to establish skill level 5 leader competencies and develop the Master Leader Course (MLC) to fill the void, a topic, gap, and needs analysis of major doctrine (ADP 1, ADP 3-0, ADP 4-0, ADP 5-0, ADP 6-0, ADP 6-22, ADP 7-0, FM 6-22, TC 7-22.7), the former First Sergeant Course curriculum, ADRP 1-03 (UTL), the individual common task list, the Sergeants Major Course curriculum, the Army Leader Requirements Model, The Army Leader Development Strategy, the Human Dimension Strategy, the Army Operating Concept, the 2011 CASAL, the INCOPD NCO Survey, AR 350-1, and AR 600-8, were thoroughly analyzed. The analysis produced 320 NCO leader tasks which were presented to a Critical Task Site Selection Board (CTSSB) and measured against a Difficulty, Intensity, and Frequency (DIF) model. The results of the CTSSB determined 27 essential skills and tasks a Master Sergeant should be competent and proficient in. These tasks were further refined against a list of general topic areas that Army leaders deemed essential to execute the art and science of leading and working on a staff at senior levels. Along with emerging and relevant issues facing the Army, these topics formed the foundation for the new Master Leader Course.

Further analysis, which occurred over 6 months and used the accountable instructional system (AIS), resulted in six major topic areas aligned to the four Army Learning Areas (Leadership and the Profession, Mission Command, Human Dimensions, and Professional Competence) and the 14 General Learning Outcomes which created the final framework for the NCO PME redesign. The results of the CASAL and INCOPD surveys addressed a common shortfall Army-wide in leadership, communication skills, training management, and program management within the NCO corps. The Army’s emphasis on readiness serving as the forcing function to add readiness as a competency. From this analysis, the basic framework (Operations, Communications, Leadership, Program Management, Training Management, and Readiness) prevailed and were presented to the TRADOC Command Sergeant Major and was established as Leader Core Competencies (LCC).

This original framework was used to redesign and develop the Basic Leader Course; six levels of Distributed Leader Course (DLC), which replaced five levels of SSD; 55 hours of proponent ALC and SLC common core lessons; and the Master Leader Course. The LCCs were intended as major topics to support the ALA framework and further develop lesson subjects (curriculum) for the NCO PME course maps. The term LCC was too often confused with Core Leader Competencies (CLC), outlined in the Leader Requirements Model (FM 6-22), therefore the term LCC was later changed to NCO C3.

**Core Leader Competencies Defined.** Core Leader Competencies (CLC) provide a clear and consistent way of conveying expectations for Army leaders. Current and future leaders want to know what to do to succeed in their leadership responsibilities. The CLC apply across all levels of the organization, across leader positions, and throughout careers. CLC are demonstrated through behaviors that can be readily

observed and assessed by a spectrum of leaders and followers, superiors, subordinates, peers, and mentors alike. This makes them a good basis for leader development and focused multi-source assessment and feedback. The chart below identifies the CLC and their subsets. CLC are inculcated, mainly at organizational development, through experiential development and reinforced through institutional affirmation. CLC improve over extended periods. Leaders acquire the basic competencies at the direct leadership level. As the leader moves to organizational and strategic level positions, the competencies provide the basis for leading through change. Leaders continuously refine and extend the ability to perform these competencies proficiently and learn to apply them to increasingly complex situations.

<b>Core Leader Competencies</b>				
<b>Leads</b>	<b>Leads Others</b>	<b>Extends Influence Beyond the Chain of Command</b>	<b>Leads by Example</b>	<b>Communicates</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide Purpose, motivation, inspiration,</li> <li>• Enforce Standards</li> <li>• Balance mission and welfare of Soldiers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build trust outside lines of authority</li> <li>• Understand sphere, means, and limits of influence,</li> <li>• Negotiate, build consensus, resolve conflict</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Display character</li> <li>• Lead with Confidence in adverse conditions,</li> <li>• Demonstrate confidence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listen actively</li> <li>• State goals For action</li> <li>• Ensure shared understanding</li> </ul>
<b>Develops</b>	<b>Creates a positive environment</b>	<b>Prepares Self</b>	<b>Develops leaders</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set the conditions for positive climate</li> <li>• Build teamwork and cohesion</li> <li>• Encourage initiative</li> <li>• Demonstrate care for people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be prepared for expected and unexpected challenges</li> <li>• Expand knowledge</li> <li>• Maintain self-awareness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess developmental needs. Develop on the job</li> <li>• Support professional and personal growth</li> <li>• Help people learn</li> <li>• Counsel, coach, and mentor</li> <li>• Build team skills and processes</li> </ul>	
<b>Achieves</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide direction, guidance and priorities</li> <li>• Develop and execute plans</li> <li>• Accomplish tasks consistently.</li> </ul>			

Figure 1. Core Leader Competencies.

## Army Leadership Requirements Model

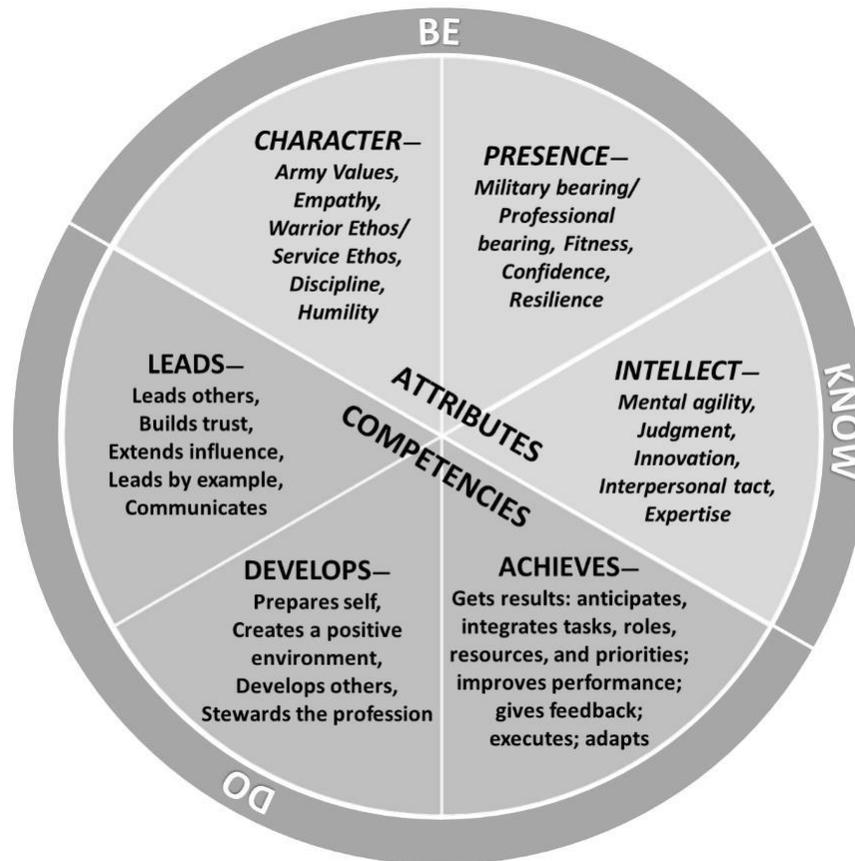


Figure 2. Army Leadership Requirements Model, APD 6-22, Jul 2019.

These competencies are developed, sustained, and improved by performing one’s assigned tasks and missions. Leaders do not wait until combat deployments to develop their CLC. They use every peacetime training opportunity to assess and improve their ability to lead Soldiers. Civilian leaders also use every opportunity to improve. To improve their proficiency, Army leaders can take advantage of chances to learn and gain experience in the leader competencies. They should look for new learning opportunities, ask questions, seek training opportunities, and request performance critiques. This lifelong approach to learning ensures leaders remain viable as a professional corps.

*“Focusing on developing Core Competencies throughout an NCO’s career ensures we have the adaptive, well-rounded People needed to win for our Nation.”*

-SMA Michael A. Grinston  
16<sup>th</sup> Sergeant Major of the U.S. Army  
31 January, 2020

**Army Learning Areas (ALAs) and General Learning Outcomes (GLOs).** In 2015, the Combined Arms Center Commanding General (CAC CG) approved four Army Learning Areas (see figure 3 below) and their 14 associated General Learning Outcomes. These ALA: Leadership and the Profession, Mission Command, Human Dimension, and Professional Competence were used in developing NCO PME Common Core in support of EXORD 236-15 “Army-wide implementation of NCOPDS”. Effective October 2019, the

CAC CG approved four new Army Learning Areas: Leadership and the Profession, Mission Command, Operations, and Training along with twelve associated General Learning Outcomes. The NCO C3 directly support the four new ALAs and their respective GLOs.

The NCOLCoE identified and cross walked each NCO C3 topic/subject area with each ALA and GLO. This was used to build the framework for the DLC, BLC, ALC-C3, SLC-C3, MLC, and SMC to meet the intent of the ALDS and ALS. The following charts show how NCO C3 support the Army’s ALAs and, for the first time in NCOPDS history, provides progressive and sequential education, utilizing both classroom and Distributed Learning (DL) to achieve the desired strategic ends of NCO education.

For each course, the institution identified competencies that supported each specific ALA and GLO. The learning outcomes are progressive and based on Bloom’s Taxonomy. The NCOs should achieve a level of mastery at each step prior to moving on to the next grade; first from the coursework (Institutional) and then by applying that knowledge (Organizational/Personal Experience). The competencies listed are not an all-encompassing list; rather they are areas of current emphasis and should remain fluid, being reassessed, as needed, to maintain relevancy.

### NCO C3 and the Supported ALAs and GLOs

Army Learning Areas	General Learning Outcomes	NCOC3 Alignment	Desired Outcomes
<b>Leadership and the Army Profession</b> ADP 1 & ADP 6-22 	1. Demonstrate proficiency in creating and sustaining an organizational climate of trust and a shared identity as Army professionals 2. Demonstrate proficiency in the Army leader attribute and competency categories described in the Leadership Requirements Model 3. Demonstrate proficiency in implementing and sustaining the fundamentals of development.	Leadership	Accomplish the Mission and Improve Organizations.
		Program Management	
		Readiness	
<b>Mission Command</b> ADP 6-0 & ADP 5-0 	4. Demonstrate proficiency in the principles of mission command. 5. Demonstrate proficiency in the elements of command and elements of control. 6. Demonstrate proficiency in command and control WFF tasks and system to integrate elements of combat power. 7. Demonstrate proficiency in the fundamentals of the operations process to enable leaders to understand, visualize, describe, direct, lead, and assess operations. 8. Demonstrate proficiency in critical and creative thinking.	Communications	Exercise Mission Command to Command and Control Army Organizations.
		Operations	
		Readiness	
		Readiness	
<b>Operations</b> FM 3-0, FM 4-0, & ADP 2-0 	9. Demonstrate proficiency in synchronizing all WFFs in Unified Land Operations in support of Joint Operations . 10. Demonstrate proficiency in understanding the OE across all domains. 11. Demonstrate proficiency in sustainment functions supporting Army Operations.	Operations	Conduct Operations to Accomplish the Mission.
		Readiness	
<b>Training</b> ADP 7-0 	12. Demonstrate proficiency in planning, preparing, executing, and assessing training.	Training Management	Train to Improve Army Readiness.
		Readiness	

Figure 3. NCO C3 and the Supported ALAs and GLOs

NCO C3 support the Select, Train, Educate, and Promote (STEP) process while increasing in academic rigor along Bloom’s Taxonomy in each PME level, along the learning continuum. The Army’s STEP program is a continuous, progressive, and deliberate process shaping PME and the Noncommissioned Officer Professional Develop System (NCOPDS) towards establishing requirements for promotion to the next higher rank as shaped by the NCO C3. Lastly, the NCO C3 serve to reinforce the ALAs aligned within prescribed rank and skill level. The NCO C3, aligned with ALAs and GLOs, provide the framework and structure required to enhance NCO education and training to 2030 and beyond.

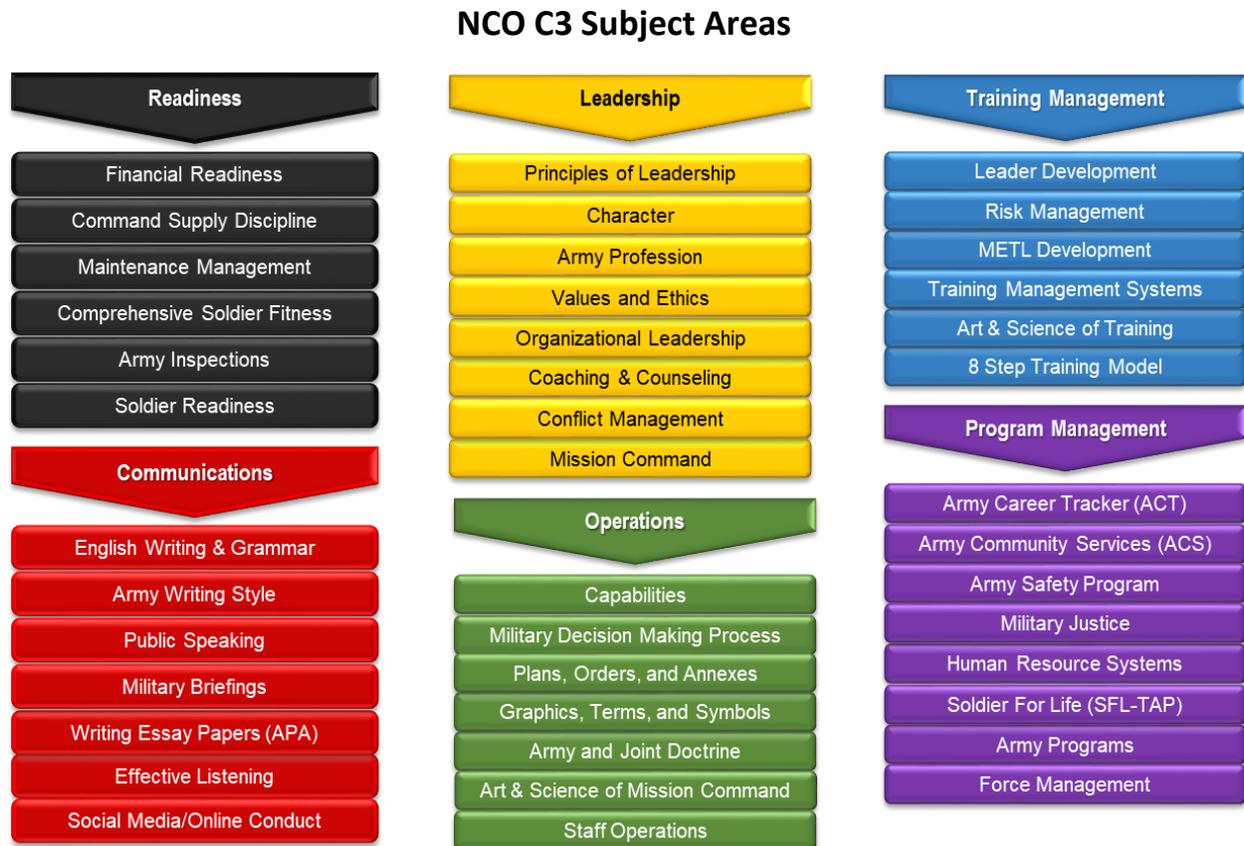


Figure 4. NCO C3 Subject Areas.

## NCO C3 Major Subject Areas Defined

**NCO Common Core Competencies.** The six competencies (*Leadership, Communications, Readiness, Training Management, Operations, and Program Management*) taught in NCO Professional Military Education (PME) are common to all Noncommissioned Officers regardless of Military Occupational Specialty (MOS), rank, or position. NCO C3 directly support the four Army Learning Areas, include topics/subjects that are sequential and progressive, are based in Army doctrine, and build on skills, knowledge, and abilities of every NCO by enhancing the shared understanding required to operate effectively as a professional member of a ready and lethal force.

**LEADERSHIP:** The Army relies on NCOs capable of conducting daily operations, executing mission command, and making intent-driven decisions. NCOs must lead by example and model characteristics of the Army Profession. This competency includes: Leader Development, Counseling, Coaching and Mentoring, the Army Ethic, Army Values, and Character Development. Also includes a thorough understanding of the Leadership Requirements Model, Mission Command Philosophy, Critical Thinking, and Problem Solving.

**COMMUNICATIONS:** Competent NCOs are effective communicators. NCOs cannot lead, train, counsel, coach, mentor, or build teams without the ability to communicate clearly. This competency includes: Verbal (Public Speaking/Military Briefings) and Written (English and Grammar) communications. Also includes, Active Listening, Facilitation, Negotiations, Social Media, Digital Communications, Media Engagement, Staff Studies, and Decision Papers.

**READINESS:** NCOs are responsible for Soldier readiness and play a key role in unit readiness. This competency includes: Army Inspections, Command Supply Discipline, Comprehensive Soldier Fitness (physical, spiritual, emotional, social, and family), Equipment Maintenance, Resiliency, MEDPROs, and Financial Readiness.

**TRAINING MANAGEMENT:** NCOs are directly responsible for training individual Soldiers, crews, and teams. The Army training principles provide a broad, but essential foundation to guide NCO leaders as they plan, prepare, execute, and assess sustained and effective training. This competency includes Risk Management, Preparing an 8-step outline, Conducting Individual Training, and the Art and Science of Training from squad to brigade level (course dependent).

**OPERATIONS:** NCOs at every echelon are expected to display the initiative necessary to assume prudent risk while taking timely advantage of opportunities that present themselves under ambiguous and chaotic conditions. This competency includes Large-Scale Combat Operations, Multi-Domain Operations (Cyber, Land, Sea, Air, & Space), Joint Operations, Operational & Mission Variables, Troop Leading Procedures, Military Decision Making Process, Warfighting Functions/Combat Power, and Operational Terms & Symbols.

**PROGRAM MANAGEMENT:** NCOs assist their officer counterparts in managing Army programs that support Soldiers and families. This competency complements readiness and includes: The Army Safety Program, Army Career Tracker (ACT), Human Resource Systems, Military Justice Procedures, the Army Force Management Model (How the Army Runs), Army Community Service (ACS) Programs, and the Soldier for Life-Transition Assistance Program (SFL-TAP).

## **Distributed Leader Course (DLC)**

The intent of DLC is to bridge the operational and institutional domains and set conditions for continuous growth. DLC will ensure learning is continuous and enduring, not sporadic and transitory. DLC is required learning that continues throughout a career that is closely linked to, and synchronized with, classroom and experiential learning. DLC sets the conditions for continuous growth as both a Soldier and leader.

DLC builds knowledge and skills through a defined sequence of learning approaches with the adjuncts of formal education and experiential learning.

#### **DLC Level I**

DLC I introduces the Corporal/Specialist to improvement of basic communication skills to message ideas and thoughts clearly, recognize the need for strong character and values, demonstrate tactical and technical competence in leading teams, and take initiative to become a lifelong learner by exploring interests and executing measures to pursue civilian education. DLC I is a prerequisite for the Basic Leader Course (BLC).

#### **DLC Level II**

DLC II introduces the Sergeant to the skills required to react to cultural dynamics in the Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental, and Multinational (JIIM) environment. Further, DLC II expounds upon the development of self and subordinates to use sound and ethical judgement, to become an agile and multi-skilled leader in the operating environment when information is ambiguous and uncertain, and to be accountable with moral and ethical character when managing programs. Lastly, the course teaches Soldiers how to take initiative to become a lifelong learner by exploring interests and executing measures to pursue civilian education. DLC II is a prerequisite for the Advanced Leader Course (ALC).

#### **DLC Level III**

DLC III introduces the Staff Sergeant to providing an opportunity to improve as a leader, a professional, and as an individual in the human dimension. The course develops the leadership skills needed to lead a platoon size element and to make quick and accurate decisions that are in the best interest of the mission and Soldiers. DLC III is a prerequisite for the Senior Leader Course (SLC).

#### **DLC Level IV**

DLC IV introduces the Sergeant First Class to leading at the unit and organizational level by developing the NCO Common Core Competencies (NCO C3) and attributes associated with the Leader Requirements Model. Learners will develop the skills necessary to ensure the unit is ready, trained, proficient, disciplined, and motivated. In addition, the course will prepare the learner for unit-level administrative and staff roles to ensure successful operations. DLC IV is a prerequisite for the Master Leader Course.

#### **DLC Level V**

DLC V introduces the Master Sergeant to leading at the unit, organizational, and operational level and is designed to close the gap between strategic and tactical planning. Learners analyze and apply knowledge, which will assist them in carrying out policies and standards on the performance, training, appearance, and conduct of enlisted personnel. The course further develops the competencies and attributes associated with the Leader Requirements Model resulting in senior leaders who are ready to advise and initiate recommendations pertaining to the local NCO support channel. DLC V is a prerequisite for the Sergeants Major Course (SMC).

#### **DLC Level VI**

DLC VI introduces senior Sergeants Major (Brigade Select) to duties at brigade level positions throughout today's operational environment (OE). This course provides the Army with self-aware and adaptive leaders of character and competence with the skills to shape and overcome the friction created by

uncertainty in operational environments. DLC VI builds on what was learned in the SMC and is a prerequisite for the Nominative Leader Course (NLC).

### **Corporal-Sergeant Roles/BLC NCO C3**

**Corporal (CPL)/Sergeant (SGT):** The CPL/SGT leads teams as part of a squad, crew, or section and is the first line of the NCO support channel. As a first line supervisor, CPLs and SGTs have the most direct impact on Soldiers. CPLs/SGTs live and work with Soldiers every day and are responsible for their health, welfare, and safety. The counseling, training, and care CPLs and SGTs provide will determine the success of the unit's mission and issues that develop during home station operations. These leaders ensure their Soldiers meet standards in personal appearance, teach them to maintain and account for their individual, as well as, unit equipment.

**The Basic Leader Course (BLC)** prepares Corporals and Sergeants to build the basic leader and trainer skills required of NCOs to lead team size elements. The BLC provides the foundation for further development along the PME learning continuum. The BLC focuses on all six NCO C3: Readiness, Leadership, Training Management, Communications, Operations, and Program Management. The BLC fully supports the Army's missions of lethality by developing smart, thoughtful, and innovative leaders, who are physically fit, can communicate effectively, think critically, train their Soldiers, and sustain their equipment.

### **Staff Sergeant Roles/ALC NCO C3**

**Staff Sergeant (SSG):** The SSG leads squads and sections and is a critical link in the NCO support channel. As a first line supervisor, SSGs live and work with Soldiers every day and are responsible for their health, welfare, and safety. These leaders ensure that their Soldiers meet standards in personal appearance and teach them to maintain and account for their individual and unit equipment and property. The SSG enforces standards, develops, and trains Soldiers in MOS skills and unit missions. The SSG's secondary role is to support the chain of command through the NCO support channel.

**The Advanced Leader Course (ALC NCO C3)** prepares Sergeants for duties as a Staff Sergeant. The course will challenge students to think critically, generate creative ideas, and learn to solve complex problems. Students will develop skills in written and oral communications using the be-know-do model through a holistic approach. Key lessons include discussing servant leadership, examining the mission command philosophy, writing an analytical essay, preparing and delivering a military briefing, and using the military decision making process (MDMP). As a result, students will be able to train, lead, and conduct operations at the squad level.

### **Sergeant First Class Roles/SLC NCO C3**

**Sergeant First Class (SFC):** The SFC may serve in a variety of positions from Platoon Sergeant to NCOIC of a section as a member of the staff at battalion or brigade levels. The SFC is the senior NCO at the platoon level and primary advisor to the Platoon Leader. They are responsible for the continued professional development and mentoring of the Platoon Leader. The SFC is primarily responsible for the health, welfare, training, and development of the Soldiers in their charge. They are the first level of NCO that has input into the unit's Mission Essential Task List and train collective tasks at the platoon level. The SFC who

is an NCOIC on staff uses their extensive experience and knowledge base to provide input to their superiors for purposes of planning or executing operations. They may also be called upon to train Soldiers on both collective and individual tasks.

**The Senior Leader Course (SLC NCO C3)** prepares Staff Sergeants for duties as a Sergeant First Class. Using the be-know-do model, students will collaborate and exchange ideas on innovative approaches to leadership and training. Students will examine management techniques, analyze mission command systems, construct a persuasive essay, create platoon training and leader development plans, and learn basic negotiation principles. As a result, students will gain an understanding of the significance of becoming a senior noncommissioned officer and the responsibilities inherent in that role.

### **Master Sergeant-1SG Roles/MLC**

**Master Sergeant (MSG):** The MSG serves as a key enlisted member of staff elements at battalion or higher levels. Although not charged with leadership responsibilities equal to that of a 1SG, the MSG's level of experience makes them an invaluable member of the staff for input on policy development, training development, and enforcing standards and discipline within the organization.

**First Sergeant (1SG):** The 1SG is the direct leadership level senior NCO and normally the most experienced Soldier in the organization. The 1SG is the primary tactical advisor and is an expert in individual and NCO skills. The 1SG advises the commander on operational planning, coordination, and supervises all logistical activities that support the unit mission. A 1SG's level of experience makes them an integral part of the unit command team, directly influencing policy development, training development, and enforcing standards and discipline within the unit.

**The Master Leader Course (MLC)** prepares Sergeants First Class for leadership and staff assignments as Master Sergeants and First Sergeants. Students will develop skills in written and oral communications, critical and creative thinking, and complex problem solving. They will discuss contemporary leadership issues, examine training management strategies, and apply the Joint Planning Process (JPP) in support of large scale combat operations in multi-domain environments. As a result, students will be able to plan training, lead Soldiers, properly advise their officer counterparts, and conduct operational planning for company level and above.

### **Sergeant Major Roles/SMC NCO C3**

**Sergeant Major (SGM):** The SGM is the key enlisted member of staff elements at battalion and higher levels. The SGM's experience and abilities are often equal to that of the unit CSM, but their direct leadership influence is limited in scope to those directly in their charge. The SGM plays a key role in the training and operations planning process by leveraging their experience and vast technical and tactical knowledge to advise the staff and the Operations Officer. The SGM is a subject matter expert in their field, primary advisor on policy development, analytical reviewer of regulatory guidance, and often fulfills the duties of the CSM in the incumbent's absence.

**Sergeants Major Course (SMC)** prepares Master Sergeants for the rank of Sergeant Major. Sergeants Major are assigned to both troop and staff assignments throughout the defense establishment. The SMC

is educationally based and performance oriented. Areas of study include leadership and management, Army and Joint operations, Force Management (How the Army Runs), sustainment operations, team building, communication skills, training management, and professional development electives.

### The NCO PME Learning Continuum Framework



Figure 5. The Noncommissioned Officer Guide, TC 7-22.7, Jan 2020

### NCO Professional Military Education (PME) Learning Continuum

The complexity of current and future operational environments places tremendous cognitive demands on Army professionals. NCOs require a greater breadth and sophistication of knowledge and skills. They must be able to think broadly and contextually about the nature of conflicts and have a working knowledge of the environment and an understanding of the geopolitical, cultural, linguistic, technical, and tactical factors that impact operations. NCOs must be able to think critically, develop creative solutions to complex and ill-structured problems, and make decisions with strategic, operational, and tactical implications, often with incomplete, ambiguous information. NCOs must also be able to think independently and act decisively while meeting the commander's intent and adhering to the highest moral and ethical standards. Further, the increasing rate of technological growth and corresponding pace of societal changes necessitate that Army leaders learn and grow continuously as committed, life-long learners (ALS, 2017). The Army is then fully committed through outlined learning strategies and implications as delivered via PME, through a sequential and progressive resident and non-resident course offering.