



What to Expect with NCOPDS

How we got to this point

The Army's NCO Education System has not been updated as an entire system for over 40 years. Army Executive Order (EXORD 236-15) directed the Army-wide implementation and change of the Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development System (NCOPDS) from the NCO Education System during the last quarter of FY17. The NCOPDS initiatives involved renaming the Warrior Leader Course to the Basic Leader Course and adding a Master Leader Course for Sergeants First Class selected for promotion to Master Sergeant. Subsequent fragmentary orders added the implementation of Deferment policy updates, the Select, Train, Educate, and Promote (STEP) policy, the delivery of the Digital Ruck Sack, and enhancing the Army Career Tracker. These directives guided change to the entire NCO Professional Military Education (PME) learning continuum. These changes consist of the creation of the Distributed Leader Courses (DLC), which is the complete overhaul of the legacy Structured Self-Development-(SSD) program, linking the DLC to the resident NCO PME, and ensuring the entire learning continuum is sequential and progressive. In addition, curriculum for all levels of NCO PME is formatted in the Army's new Experiential Learning Model (ELM) that is more conducive to student centered, adult education.

Leader Core Competencies (LCC)

TRADOC determined that there are six Leader Core Competencies (LCC), which all NCOs should develop while in PME. The six LCCs are Readiness, Leadership, Training Management, Army and Joint Operations, Program Management, and Communications. The USASMA used these six Leader Core Competencies in the redesign of NCO PME and they now replace what was formally known as common core in the legacy NCOES.

Structured Self Development (SSD) to Distributed Leader Course (DLC)

In November 2016, the TRADOC CSM directed the USASMA to redesign the legacy SSD and rename it the Distributed Leader Course (DLC). The redesigned DLC links self-development education with the resident NCO PME. The current SSD consists of five levels, which average 80 academic hours of curriculum. The new DLC will consist of six levels averaging 40 academic hours of curriculum. The projected delivery of DLC I to the force is June 2018 and DLC II to follow August 2018. Levels III, IV, V, and the new level VI will activate sequentially in 3 to 4 month increments following August 2018. Soldiers currently enrolled in their requisite level of SSD will remain in those courses until they are completed. Upon full implementation of DLC, HRC will automatically enroll Soldiers into the new course after their selection for promotion.

Basic Leader Course (BLC) Redesign

The BLC focuses on leader skills and knowledge needed to lead a team/squad size unit; providing the foundation for further training and development; and building functional leadership attributes and competencies. The current BLC is 22 days (169 hours). It includes 30 lessons, 9 assessments, and 3 multiple-choice examinations. The

USASMA is currently conducting content validations of the redesigned BLC with a target release date of June 2018. The new BLC will remain 22 days (169 hours). The BLC redesign will have 22 lessons, 5 assessments, and no multiple-choice examinations. The new BLC curriculum increases the educational rigor, requires more student collaboration in the classroom, and replaces the multiple-choice examinations with assessing demonstrated abilities.

Advanced and Senior Leader Course Leader Core Competencies

The redesigned LCCs will provide centers and schools teaching Advanced Leader Courses (ALC) and Senior Leader Courses (SLC) with leadership competencies required of all Army NCOs. Using the Leadership Requirements Model (LRM), leaders collaborate and exchange ideas on innovative approaches to leadership and training issues. Leaders will examine management techniques, analyze mission command systems, prepare essays, create platoon training and leader development plans, and learn basic negotiation principles. As a result, leaders will gain an understanding of the significance of becoming a senior noncommissioned officer and the responsibilities inherent in that role. The USASMA delivered the 55-hour curriculum for the ALC and SLC Leader Core Competencies to the proponent schools and centers October 2018. The proponent schools and centers will infuse the LCCs into their programs of instruction.

Master Leader Course (MLC)

As of October 1, 2017, the USASMA delivered and implemented a resident Master Leader Course (MLC) at various locations. The purpose of the MLC is to prepare

selected Sergeants First Class for positions of greater responsibility throughout the Army and Department of Defense. The course develops the professional skills and competencies required of Master Sergeants in the Army of 2020 and beyond. The course is academically rigorous and conducted in a collaborative learning environment. The curriculum focuses on professional writing, public speaking, critical thinking, organizational leadership, operational level of planning, and readiness. Ten NCO Academies currently deliver the resident MLC. Starting in November 2017, the USASMA will start the instructional delivery validation of the Master Leader Course Non-Resident (MLCNR). HRC will enroll eligible Soldiers into the MLC and MLCNR based on the Soldier's selection for promotion to Master Sergeant. Current projections have the non-resident course coming online on or about May 2018.

With the exception of four levels of DLC, the USASMA expects to deliver all NCO PME redesigns to the Army by 1 October 2018. By putting "Leadership" back into the "L" of NCO PME courses, the intent is to better educate noncommissioned officers to become agile, adaptive, creative & critical thinking, innovative, problem solving leaders who will meet the challenges of an ever changing and complex operating environment.

